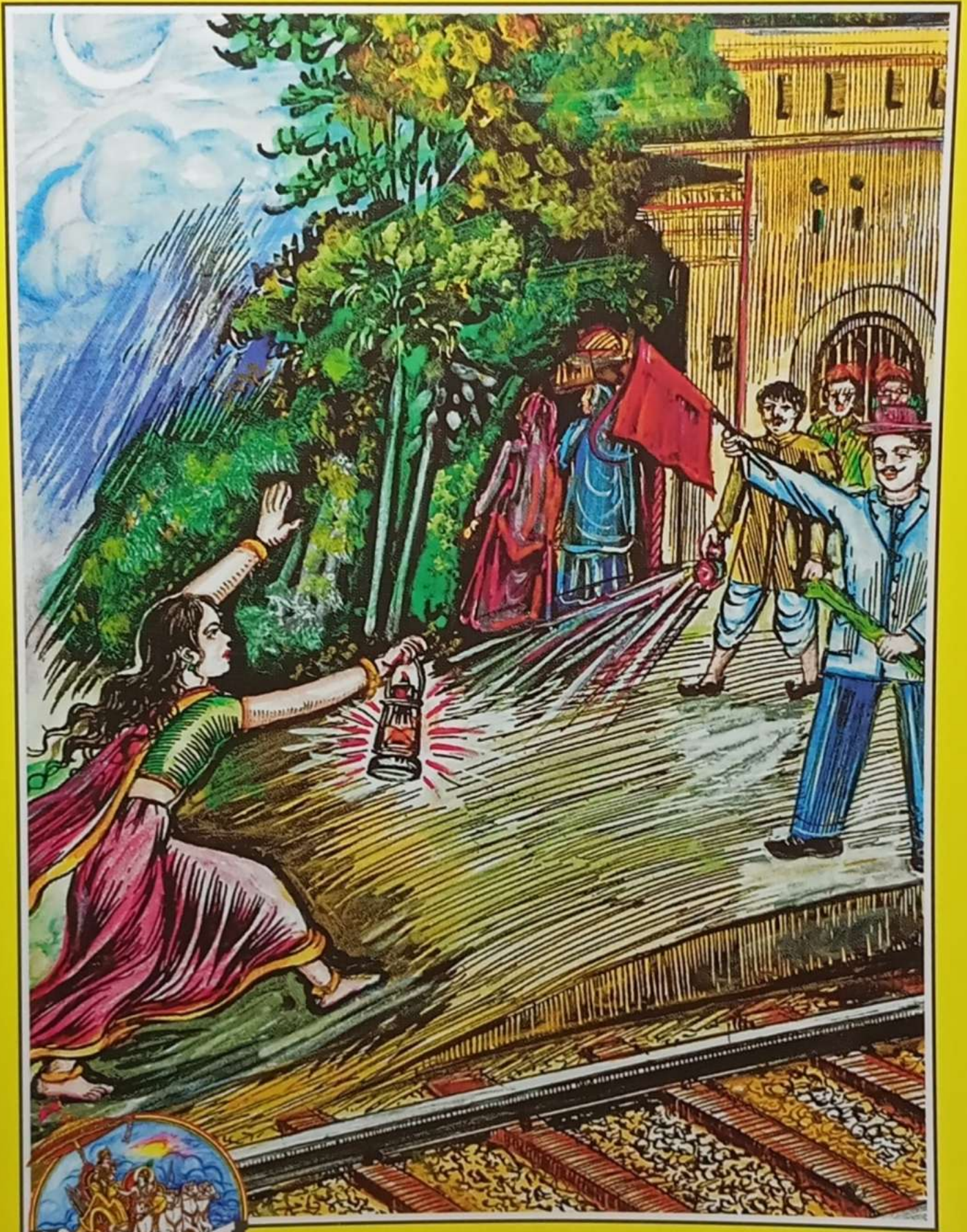


Virtuous Children



॥ Śrī Hari ॥

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Publisher's Note

Obedience and benevolence are the priceless possessions of human life. These virtues make life elevated and successful. Therefore they should be cultivated from childhood, so that children may become obedient to parents, teachers and elders and may be benevolent to others.

This book is the combined English version of the two Hindi books '**Guru Aura Mātā-Pitā ke Bhakta Bālaka**' and '**Dayālu Aura Paropakārī Bālaka-Bālikāyē**' consisting of the short stories depicting obedience and benevolence of boys and girls.

We hope that this book will imbibe these virtues among children and will help them to become good and responsible citizens.

—Publisher



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Śatamanyu

In Satya Age once there was drought. So there was neither corn for men nor grass (fodder) for animals. The next year also there was drought. People and animals were in great distress. Rivers and ponds became dry. The scorching heat of the sun burnt grass, and trees became lifeless. There was an all-round cry of distress for water.

There had been drought not only for one or two years but continually for twelve years. People began to cry for help and mercy. No corn, no water, no grass was left. Rainy season and winter season totally disappeared. There was only dry summer season. Terrible hot dust and winds were blowing. Flying fowls were rarely seen in the sky. Not only beasts and birds but innumerable human beings were trapped by death. So many innocent babies died of starvation because no milk was left at their mothers' breasts. Men and women were reduced to skeletons and their condition became very pitiable, but from where could a handful of corn be obtained? How could corn be obtained even by spending the inexhaustible treasure of a king and boundless wealth of multi-millionaires? The situation became from bad to worse. All the people were under the jaws of death.

Someone said that if a human being was killed as a sacrifice, it might cause rain. The suggestion appealed to the people but life is dear to everyone. People could not force a person to sacrifice his life. A large number of people assembled but all of them remained silent, their heads were bent. Suddenly the silence was disturbed. All the people raised their heads and saw that a very handsome boy of twelve was standing. His limbs were very tender. He said, "Gentlemen! I am gladly ready to sacrifice my life in order to protect the lives of so many beings and to rid my country from this crisis. This life is of the country and is to be sacrificed for the country; what can be its more utility than this? With this pretext God, the Universal Spirit, will be served with this perishable body."

"Dear Son, Śatamanyu! you are blessed," a man cried and running, hugged him. It was his father. He said "Dear son, you have immortalized your ancestors." Śatamanyu's mother was also there. She neared her son. Her eyes were filled with tears. She embraced her son so warmly as if she would never lose hold of him.

At the time, appointed for the celebration, the sacrifice ceremony began. Śatamanyu was given a bath with the water of sacred places of pilgrimage and he was adorned with dress and ornaments. His forehead was pasted with sandalwood. He was garlanded.



The boy came to the altar of sacrifice. Standing near the sacrifice-pillar, he began to think of Indra, the king of gods.

The sacrifice altar was calm and quiet. The

boy, with his head bent, was ready to be sacrificed. The crowd assembled there, keeping quiet, was beholding the boy with unblinking eyes. Suddenly in the sky, wonderful musical instruments blared forth. The heavenly flowers were showered on him. Suddenly with the thunder of clouds, Indra, the king of gods, who holds a thunderbolt was revealed. All the people, having heard the sound and having seen Indra, were wonderstruck and were staring with wide-open eyes. Indra, fondling him with his patronizing hand, said, "Dear boy! I am pleased with your feelings of devotion and welfare for the country. The country, whose boys are ever ready to sacrifice their lives to protect their country, can never have a downfall. Being satisfied with the feeling of sacrifice, I'll award you the fruit of sacrifice without your sacrifice." Having said so, Indra, the king of gods disappeared.

Next day it rained so heavily that the earth was flooded. The result was that there was an abundance of corn, water, fruits, flowers and grass etc. Śatamanyu's patriotism, his feelings of sacrifice and welfare for others, caused rejoicings all around.



Siddhārtha Kumāra

Lord Buddha was named Siddhārtha Kumāra in his childhood. Emperor Śuddhodana got a garden planted for him. One day he was walking in that garden. In the meanwhile, a swan, crying with pain, fell down from the sky. Prince Siddhārtha raised it up and put it on his lap. Someone had shot an arrow to kill the swan. The arrow was still stuck into its body. Prince Siddhārtha pulled the arrow out from its body and stuck it into his left arm with his right hand so that he could know, how he felt, when the arrow was stuck into his body. Tears streamed down his face incessantly. Without thinking of his own pain, but thinking of the pain in the swan's body, he burst into tears.

Prince Siddhārtha washed the wounds of the swan, applied the sap of leaves on those wounds, and having put it on his lap, rubbed it gently with love. In the meanwhile from some distance, he heard Devadatta's voice—"Has my swan fallen down here?"

Prince Devadatta was Siddhārtha Kumāra's cousin. He was hard hearted. He enjoyed hunting. He had shot the arrow. Having seen the swan on Siddhārtha Kumāra's lap, he came running to him and said, "This is my swan. Give it to me."



Siddhārtha said, "Have you reared it?"

Devadatta said, "I have shot an arrow. Just see, my arrow is lying there."

Prince Siddhārtha said, "You have shot an

arrow. Why did you shoot an arrow to kill an innocent bird? I have seen, by sticking the arrow into my arm, how much pain it causes when it is stuck into the body, I'll not give it to you. When it recovers from its ill health, I'll set it free so that it may fly away."

Devadatta was not a prince of simple and straight-forward nature. They began to quarrel with each other. They forwarded the case to emperor Śuddhodana. The emperor listened to both of the princes. He said to Devadatta, "Can you kill this swan?"

Devadatta said, "Kindly, give it to me, I'll kill it just now."

The emperor asked him, "Will you bring it back to life again?"

Devadatta said, "A dead being can't be brought back to life. How can I bring it back to life?"

The emperor said, "This rule of hunting is justified that he, who kills a beast or a bird, has a claim on it. If the swan had been killed, you would have set up a claim to it. But he, who saves a dying being, has more claim on the being than the man, who has shot it. Siddhārtha has saved the life of this swan. Therefore he has a claim on it."

Prince Siddhārtha took the swan. When its wound was healed, he let it fly away.



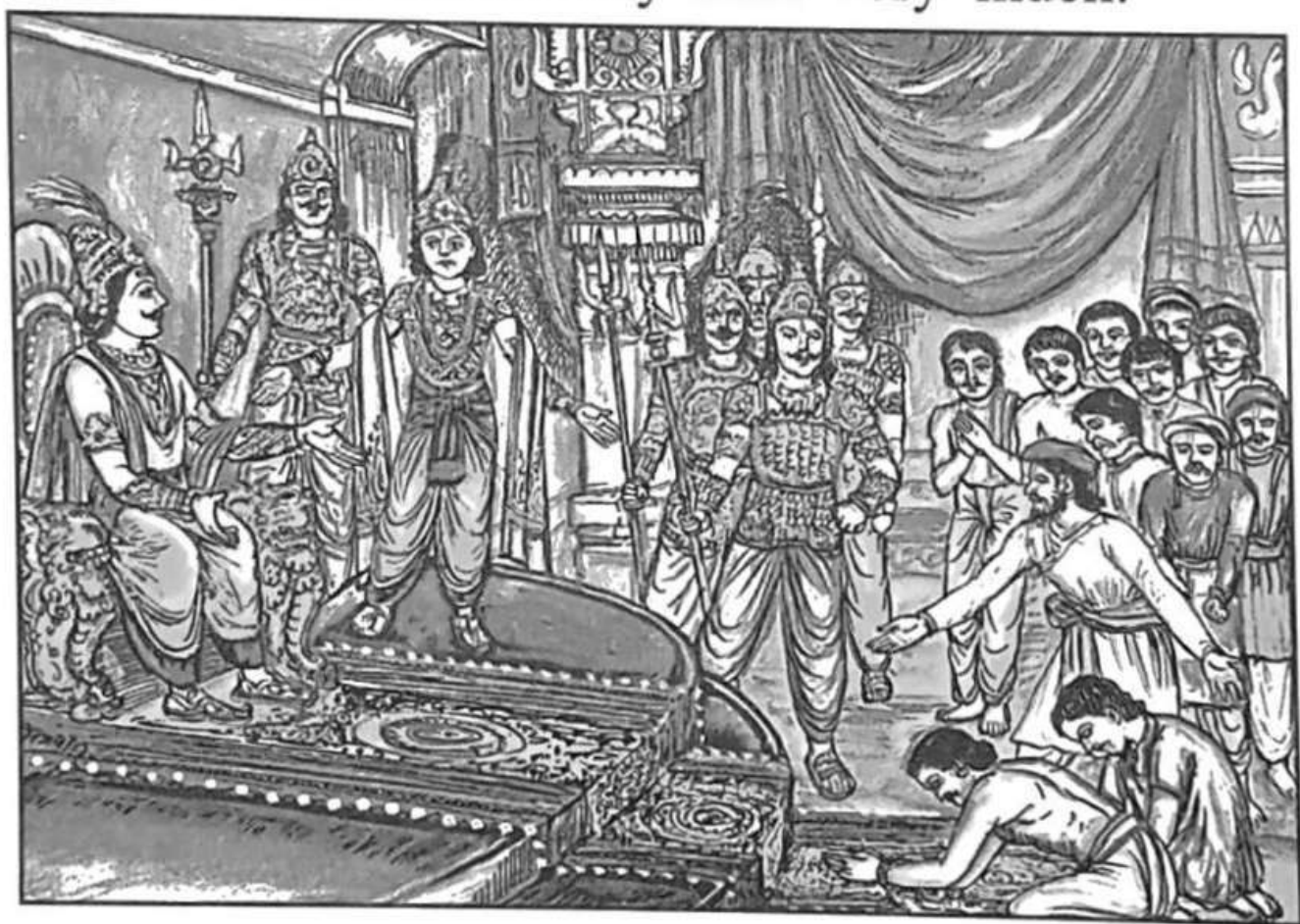
Kind Mūlarāja

About nine hundred years ago, King Bhīmadeva ruled over Gujarāta. He had a son named Mūlarāja. The boy was promising and very kind. Once there was drought in Gujarāta. The fields were dried up. The people of a village could not pay the land-revenue to the king. The constables of the king confiscated all their belongings and produced them before the king. Prince Mūlarāja was also playing there nearby. The poor farmers were sad and were talking among themselves about their miserable condition. The prince listened to their pitiable condition. Having heard their pitiable condition, his eyes filled with tears. Mūlarāja decided that he would free them from sufferings.

In those days the prince was learning the art of riding. The king had said to him, “When you become expert in the art of riding, you’ll be given a prize.” Mūlarāja, by hard and constant practice, learnt the art of horse-riding. He displayed his talent to his father. The king, being pleased with him, said to him, “My dear son, I am very much pleased with you. What prize do you want?” Mūlarāja said, “Respected father, return the confiscated belongings of these poor farmers to them and let them go.”

Having heard so, the king was very much

pleased with him. His eyes filled with tears of joy. Then the king said to him, "Dear son, you did not demand anything for yourself. Demand whatever you want." Then Mūlarāja said, "Honourable Father, if you are pleased with me, give me the prize that if there is failure of crops, that year, the revenue should not be collected from farmers and this should be made a rule. If you do so, it will solace my soul very much."



The king did so, he returned the confiscated belongings of the farmers to them, and made it a rule that, in case of the failure of crops, no land revenue would be collected from them. The farmers very happily, giving him their blessings, returned to their houses.



Abraham Lincoln's Kindness

One day Abraham Lincoln with his friends, having walked, was returning home. He saw that from the front side, a horse was coming. The horse was saddled but it was riderless. Having seen the riderless horse, he said, "Whose horse is it and where is its rider?"

His friends said—"It should belong to a drunkard and he should be lying somewhere dead drunk."

Abraham said, "We should search him." His friends got enraged—"It is dark and you are unnecessarily getting involved in searching a drunkard."

But a man cannot give up his habit which he has formed since his childhood. Abraham had been very kind since his childhood. He could not help himself without helping a man, when the man was in crisis. He said, "We don't know in what crisis the rider is. What does it matter, if he is a drunkard? We have to help a needy man. I am



going to search him. A man should help other man."

His friends, being annoyed, said, "You are

talking as if only you are a great man and we are not men but we are beasts. Have your humanitarianism with you.”

His friends went to their houses but Abraham started in search of the rider. In fact he found an intoxicated unconscious man lying on the way. He was so much intoxicated that he could not regain consciousness, eventhough he was very much shaken. Abraham took him home. When a fifteen year old boy of a poor labourer came home loaded with a dirty, foul smelling, intoxicated person, was it not natural for the members of the family to be annoyed? But it was nothing new for Abraham. When his sister was annoyed, he said, “Sister, don’t be annoyed! He is also a man and it is our duty to serve him.”

Abraham gave him a bath and changed his clothes. When he regained consciousness, he gave him food. Next morning the drunkard went to his house.

The same boy, because of his virtuous acts, afterwards became the president of U.S.A. Even now the people of U.S.A. hold him in high esteem by calling him ‘Father Lincoln’.



Kindness of an Orphan Boy

The queen of a great nation loved children very much. She fostered orphan children at her own expense. She had given an order, "If you come across an orphan child, send it immediately to me."

One day constables came across a child. They handed it over to the queen. The queen began to foster it with innate affection.

When the baby was five years old, she sent him to the teacher to be educated. He began to study from his heart. The boy was handsome, virtuous and intelligent. It enhanced the queen's affection for him and she began to love him like her own son. The boy also regarded her as his real mother.

One day when he came back from school, he was very gloomy. The queen put him on her lap and asked the reason of his gloominess with affection. The boy burst into tears. The queen affectionately wiped his tears and kissing him with great love, said, "Dear son, why are you weeping?" The boy said, "Dear mother, I went on weeping in the school



throughout the day today. My teacher expired. My teacher's wife and sons were weeping. I saw them weeping." They were saying "We are totally poor. We have no means for the maintenance of life, nor there are neighbours who may help us." The boy

further said, "Dear mother, having seen them weeping and having listened to their sad plight, I am very sad. Kindly do something to help them."

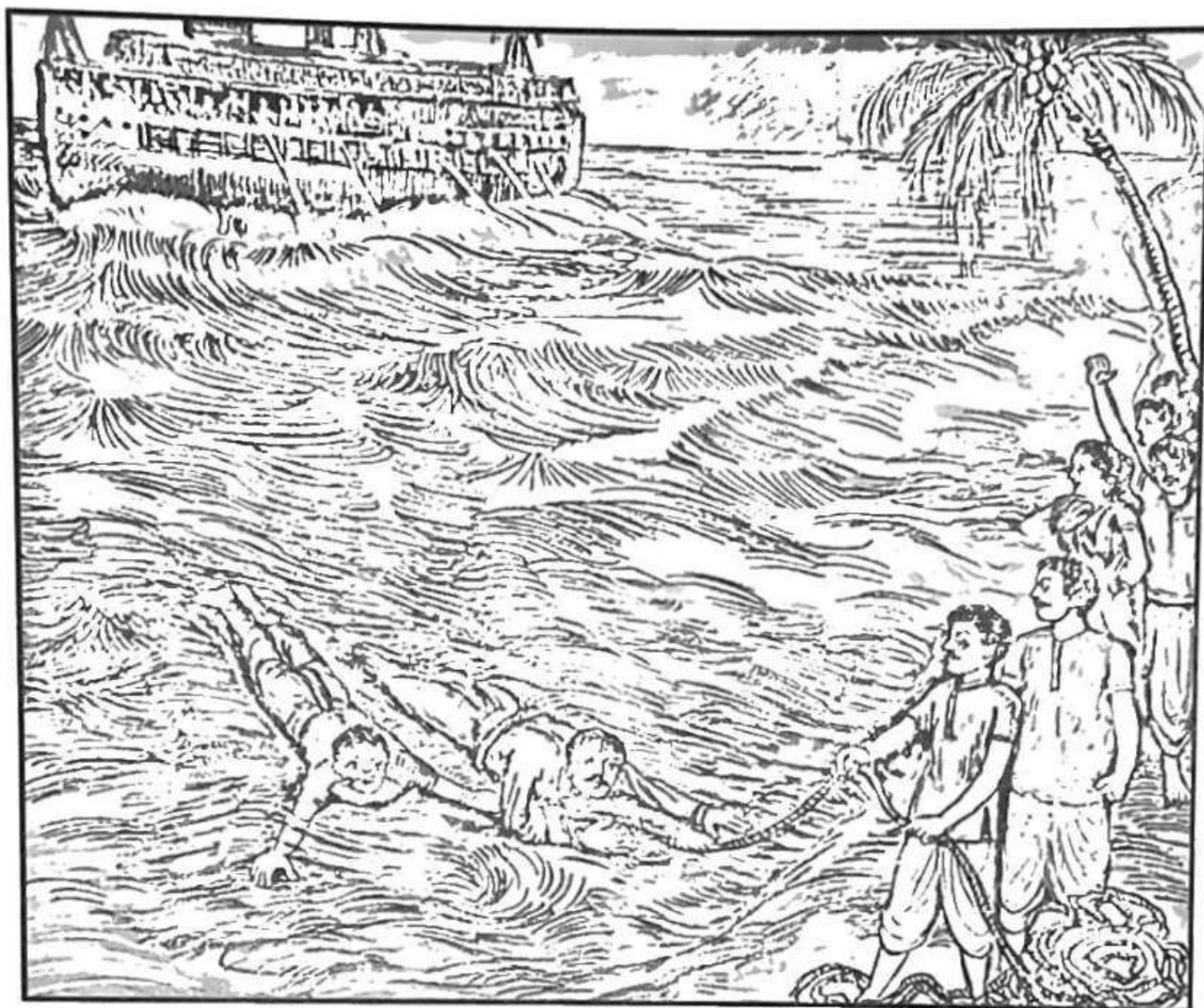
Having listened to the son, the queen's heart was filled with pity. She immediately sent her servant to enquire about the welfare of his teacher's wife and children and having kissed the boy, said, "Dear son, having perceived your good ideas and virtuous feelings, I am very much pleased. I'll make every possible arrangement for the maintenance of the life of your preceptor's wife and children. You need not worry."

The servant, who was sent by the queen, came back and said to the queen, "Whatever the boy has said, is quite true." The queen gave the boy five hundred rupees and sent him to the wife of his preceptor to give this money to her, and afterwards she made full arrangement for the maintenance of the family and for the education of children.



The Kind Boy, Who Saved a Ship at the Time of Crisis

A few years ago, in the winter season, on the shore of the sea, in a village, a noise was heard, "At a little distance, a ship is stuck in a quagmire (marsh) and the passengers on board are in distress." Having heard this, people from all sides assembled there, and they began to worry. At that time no life boat was available by which they could be saved. They had to stay there hungry and thirsty for three days. The sea was very deep, so no one could reach there by swimming. Many people expressed sympathy but no one dared save them. At that time a student came there. He was filled with pity for the passengers on board. Though he was not very strong yet he was courageous. Therefore he said, "I am going to save them." Having said so, he tied an end of a rope round his waist and he jumped into the sea. His courage surprised all the people and they began to pray to God for his success.



That student, facing a lot of difficulty, began to swim in the sea. He was firmly resolved that he would save the distressed people. It was a tedious task to cover a long distance in the deep sea by swimming. Other people, standing there, were stronger than that boy yet they had no courage to swim. The student, being swayed by pity, suffering a lot of trouble, reached the ship. He cut the rope tied round his waist with the knife which he was holding with his teeth. His friend, standing on the shore was holding the other end

of the rope so that he could be pulled back, if he could not swim. He caught hold of a man from the ship and came back swimming with him to the shore. He left the man on the shore and again went swimming to the ship. Thus he went six times and saved six lives. Then he was very much fatigued, yet the seventh time he tried to save a weak boy. The boy, being weak, could not swim with him and so he was drowned. This courageous boy dived and pulled him up. Once again he was drowned and again the courageous boy dived and pulled him up. At last he was successful in saving his life, though he himself had to face a lot of difficulty. The people, standing on the shore, congratulated and applauded the courageous boy each time he saved a man, and at last they showered very many thanks, applause and blessings on him.



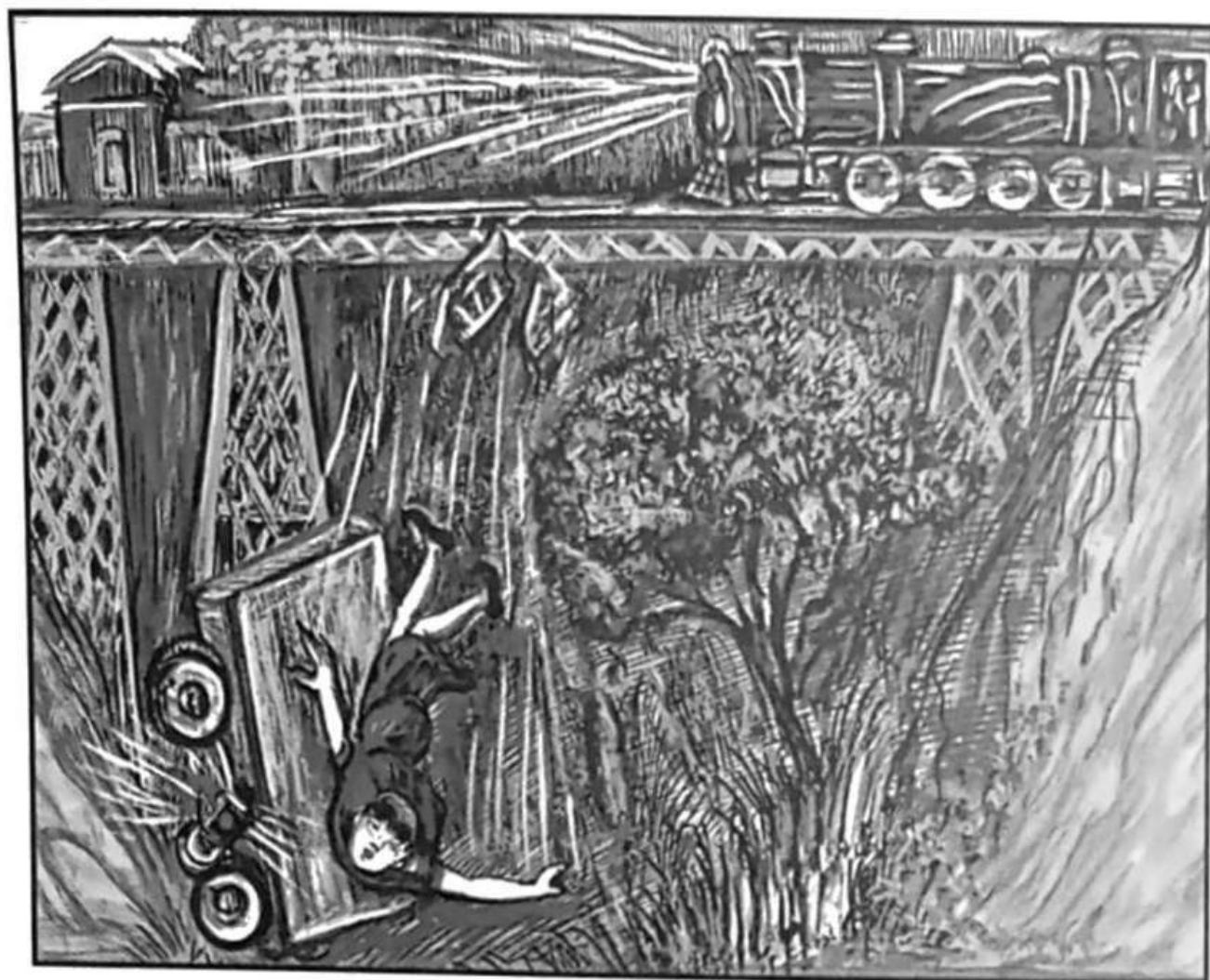
A Kind Boy, Who Sacrificed His Life to Avoid Railway Accident

There was a watchman in the railway department, who looked after the bridge across a river. His fourteen year old son also lived with him. One day there was an outburst of violent storm with heavy rainfall. At night before the arrival of the train, the father went to watch over the bridge while his son stayed at home. After sometime the river was in flood and several villages were flooded. The boy came out of his house and went to the bridge. He found that the bridge was broken. He called his father but there was no response. He thought that it was time for the arrival of the train, and if he didn't stop the train, it would fall into the river and all passengers would be killed.

Thinking so, he was filled with pity for the passengers and therefore he had a firm determination to stop the train somehow or the other.

The train used to pass through a narrow pass of a mountain and there was no room even to stand there. So the boy thought what he should do. All of a sudden a striking idea came to his mind that a trolley should be put on the railway track and a red light should be shone by which the train would certainly stop. He pushed the trolley towards the track and left it on the track and he himself stood on this trolley with a red light in his hand. In the meanwhile the train arrived. The driver, having seen the red light, tried to stop the train by applying the brakes; but the train could not be stopped immediately,

because it was moving at a high speed. The boy cried and said, "The bridge is broken, the bridge is broken." Just then the engine of the train collided against the trolley,



the trolley with the boy jumped up several feet, then it fell down and the boy was shattered to pieces. Then the train stopped and the driver found the boy dead.

The next day for him a grave was dug and on the grave stone it was written—

'Karl Springale, Age 14 years'

He died a brave and magnificent death. He saved two hundred lives by sacrificing his own life.



The Boy, Who Protected the Villagers from Being Drowned

In Europe, a region of Holland is below sea level, and so sometimes the water of the sea was filled in that region and caused terrible havoc to the villagers inhabiting those villages. In order to escape this calamity the people had built a high dam on the shore of the sea. Even then sometimes the water flowed with such a force that it damaged the dam and caused great loss to the people. The elderly people explained to their sons the loss that they had to sustain in the past, when the dam was damaged. They said to their sons, "If even a little water starts leaking through a crack, it should be mended immediately, otherwise, having broken the dam, water will flow with such a force that it will cause great loss to life and property."

One day in the winter season, a boy was passing by the dam. He saw that water was leaking through a hole in the dam. At once he was reminded of what his father had said to him. He thought that either he should run and convey the message to his father or he should save his life by standing up on a place higher than the dam. Then the second thought came to his mind that by standing at a higher point, he alone would be saved but other people would be killed. He thought how to save other people also. An idea came to his mind that he would quickly inform all the people, but in the meanwhile if the water rushed forcefully, the hole would become larger and the lives



of all the villagers would be endangered. Therefore he thought that somehow or the other, he should stop the flow of water, then only he, his father and other villagers would be saved from being drowned.

After that he fixed his hand on the hole through which water was flowing. Thus the flow of water was checked and the hole could also not become larger. Thus he checked the flow of water throughout the night. But it was bitter cold, the place, where he was sitting, was also cold and his wet hand had also become very cold. Because of these factors he was shivering. But without taking any heed of his body, he remained sitting there. At home his father was waiting for him. In the morning, a man passing by that way, saw that boy, sitting near the dam, with his hand thrust into the hole. The man asked him, "What are you doing here?" The boy in a faltering voice replied, "The water flowed through the hole, I have stopped it, by thrusting my hand, otherwise the village will be flooded and destroyed." He could not speak more than this, because he was hungry and he had become unconscious because of extremely cold weather. After it, that man pulled the boy's hand out and pushed his hand into the hole and cried for help. Hearing the cry for help, people assembled there and they filled the hole well with earth and sand etc. Then the people paid great honour to the boy because he had staked his life in order to save the village from annihilation. Had he not put his hand into the hole, the villagers would have been drowned in the flood.



Thomas Phip, A Kind Boy

At that time the war was being waged between Crimea and Russia. A boy named Thomas Phip played on flute in the band of the Granadier Party. Phip saw that nearby a wounded soldier was writhing in pain and he heard him saying "I'll feel thankful, if anyone offers me a cup of tea." The boy's kind heart was filled with pity in order to satiate his last desire. Soldiers have bottles of tea—water and kettles etc. in their bags. At that time a volley of bullets was going on incessantly; yet that boy without caring for his life, in the volley of bullets, gathered fire-wood, and by burning fire, began to prepare tea. In the meanwhile a bullet passed by his cap while the other bullet hit the arm of his coat and crossed it. Once his shoulder was slightly hit but the boy, without giving a heed to it, was quenching the soldier's thirst, with a tender heart, by providing him with hot tea. In the vicinity, numerous wounded soldiers were lying. Having perceived such a sympathetic attitude of that boy, the wounded soldiers, who were likely to breathe their last, blessed the boy from the core of their heart.



The Boy, Who Saved the Sinking Ship

Once a ship, which was nearing the sea-shore, because of a storm, was going to sink. In order to save the passengers and the crew on the ship, it was necessary to send a boat from the shore but in order to sail it, one more man was needed. On the shore a boy was standing. Seeing the pitiable condition of the passengers and the crew, he was filled with pity and he got ready to go in the boat. At that time his mother was also standing there. The boy asked his mother, "Mother! should I go to help them? The passengers in that ship will be saved only, if this boat reaches there."

Having heard the request of the boy, first his mother was deluded, because this boy's father had gone away by the same boat but did not return. The people thought that he must have died. She had no other support besides this boy. She thought, "If something untoward happens to my son, I'll have no support." By thinking so, her glance was cast towards the ship. She saw that the people in the ship were eagerly waiting for



the boat and the ship was filling up with more and more water. So she thought, "The passengers in the ship must have come from far and near and their companions, wives, sons, parents and sisters etc., will suffer a lot of trouble, if something unfortunate happens to the ship. If my son dies, when this boat sinks, I'll make both ends meet somehow or the other. Therefore it is better for me to work for their welfare rather than for my welfare." Having thought so, she said to her son, "My dear son, go, may God grant you life and happiness!"

Then the boy reached the ship by boat and all the people who were boarding the ship, were saved. By chance that boy's father was also boarding that ship. The boy and other sailors recognized his father. The boy said to his father, "Where have you been for so many days? The people thought that you must have died."

His father replied, "In a terrible storm, my boat was turned over. It was by chance that I could catch hold of a plank and with the help of that plank I started swimming. On the other side, a ship was sailing. The crew of the ship saw me and they pulled me up and I was on board. That ship reached Africa and then it sailed back. I was coming back home by this ship, again there was a storm and then you came with this boat."

Then he with his son went home. The son said to his mother, "See, mother! you allowed me to go by boat, so my father was also saved." His mother was very much happy to see her husband and she thanked God. That boy was properly rewarded for his virtuous acts of saving the lives of other people. God always does good to those who do good to others.



The Boy, Who Served the Helpless Traveller

One day a lame sailor was sitting on the way which led to a village. The weather was extremely hot and that lame man was unable to move on because his crutch had broken. He was sitting with the hope that if a cart passed that way, the cart-driver would give him a lift and he would reach his village. In the meanwhile a cart arrived there. He requested the cart-driver to give him a lift but the cart man demanded fare. He had nothing to pay, therefore he could not go. For a long time no other cart arrived, therefore he slept under a tree. After sometime, when he woke up, he saw that it was raining and he was covered with a cloth and nearby a boy was sitting, who was repairing his broken crutch by tying the two broken pieces with a string, so that it could again be useful for the lame man. Having seen this, the lame man asked that boy—"O good boy, why have you covered me with your cloth and why are you sitting here without this cloth on?"

The boy replied, "I was passing this way. I saw you a bit drenched, while you were sleeping soundly. You must have woke up being completely drenched and you must have lost your sleep, this I did not like. Moreover you are old, therefore having caught cold, you must have fallen ill. So I put my cloth on



your body. I am a young boy, so I can bear cold. Having seen your crutch broken, I am tying it with my string. I live in a nearby village. If you accompany me to that village, I'll request my uncle to give his new crutch to you."

Having listened to the boy, the sailor was very much surprised and suddenly tears streamed out of his eyes. Having seen tears in his eyes, the boy asked him, "Why are you weeping?" Hearing this, the lame man said, "My son was also good as you are and his voice was also as sweet as is yours. Five years ago when I joined the service in navy, I had left him. Now I am weeping, because I am reminded of him, and I don't know where he is."

Having listened to the lame man, the boy asked, "What is the name of that boy?" The lame man said, "His name is Viṭṭhala and my name is Jīvo." Having heard the name, that boy jumped and clung to the chest of the lame man and said, "O Father! I am your son Viṭṭhala." Then the boy took that gentleman to the village and narrated the whole anecdote to his uncle. After this, both brothers embraced each other and began to live together joyfully. Immediately the new stick (crutch) was prepared and the sailor began to go here and there in the village with the help of that stick. The lame man kept his old crutch, which the boy had mended as a valuable souvenir throughout his life, because it was his crutch which proved helpful in his union with his son and brother.



Ansārula Haque, A Kind Boy

In Bihar, in the village Belavāgañja, a poor man's house caught fire. At that time the people, living in that house, came running outside the house. When they had come out, they came to know that a child was left inside the house. They wanted to take the child out, but by that time the thatched roof of the house had blazed up. The house was in flames. No one had the courage to fetch the child. The child's mother and other relatives were lamenting, standing outside the house.

Seeing the flames, students from a nearby school, came running and they tried to extinguish the fire. When one of those students heard that a child was left sleeping in the burning house, he immediately put off his shirt and entered the burning house through the flames. He did not know where the child was sleeping; so he had to find it out. As soon as he found it out, he hid it on his lap and came out running. The child's mother immediately embraced it and put it on her lap.



The brave boy, who saved the child, by staking his life, was Ansārula Haque. Ansārula Haque himself was badly burnt and therefore he had to undergo treatment for burns in the hospital but with his courage, besides protecting the life of a child, he protected humanity at large. In fact, a man in the true sense of the term is he, who remains ready to sacrifice his life, when duty calls him.



The Boy, Who Reciprocated Good for Evil

In a city, in a school, the rule was made that if a boy committed an offence, his teacher would name other boys to play the role of judges and they would give judgment. If the offence was proved to be true, the malefactor (defaulter) was put into a dark cell and he was provided only with food and water there. Besides this, it was also the rule that if any other boy wanted to be imprisoned instead of the defaulter, the offender was released and the other boy was put into dungeon.

In that school there was a naughty boy, who ever indulged in mischiefs and was imprisoned. The teacher was also fed up with him. His teacher finally warned him by declaring, "If you indulge in mischiefs any more, you will be expelled from school for ever."

Inspite of this warning, that naughty boy one day beat a boy. The judges gave judgment and he was held guilty. Then it was asked, "Is anybody ready to be imprisoned in place of him." All the boys said, "He is a very bad boy, we won't take pity on him." At that time the boy, whom the naughty boy had beaten, took pity on him and said, "Sir, I am ready to be imprisoned in place of him."

Hearing this, all the boys were wonderstruck. So this boy was imprisoned and the naughty boy was released. The naughty boy began to think, "How good and kind that boy is, that, though I had beaten him, he got me released." Different kinds of thoughts came to his mind and finally he repented for his past misdeeds. He begged



for forgiveness to his teacher for his past offences and requested his teacher to release that kind boy by promising that he would never do any misdeed in future.



A Kind Student

In Calcutta, in a school, two gentle students studied. Every year one of them stood first and the other stood second in his class. The mother of the former student fell ill and she died. So he could not attend the school for two months. The people thought that the latter boy would stand first that year. But when the result was announced, people came to know, that the boy, who could not attend the school for two months, still stood first. The teacher was wonderstruck. He went through the answer books of the two boys and came to know, that the latter student had not attempted some of the questions, which were very easy. Therefore the teacher called the latter student and asked him privately the reason of his not attempting the easy questions in his answer books. The boy replied, "That boy is more intelligent than I. His mother died. So he could not make full preparations for the examination. In that state, I should have stood first. But my standing first, did not appeal to me. So I left some easy questions unattempted intentionally. My mother is alive but that boy has lost his mother. Kindly confine this fact only to yourself."

The teacher, having perceived the kindness and beneficence of that student, was very much pleased and he said to the boy, "You have stood first in the



topmost and the most important examination of life. The school examination stands no where, when that is compared with this—life-examination.”

Kindness of an Imprisoned Boy

A boy was imprisoned for some crime. Once he had a successful escape from the prison. Being very hungry he begged a meal from a nearby hut in the village. In that hut, a very poor farmer with his family lived. The poor farmer said, "Brother! Sorry, we have no food to offer. This year we could not pay even land-revenue (Tax). It seems that a small piece of our land and this hut will be confiscated. Then what will happen to us, only God knows?"

Having heard the sad state of affairs of the farmer, the boy forgot his hunger and took pity on the pitiable condition of the farmer. He said, "See, I have an escape from the prison, catch me and hand me over to the police, you will get a prize of fifty rupees. How many rupees have you to pay as rent?" The farmer said, "Forty rupees. But I don't want to hand you over to the police." The boy said, "That's all. If it is only forty rupees, the purpose has been served. Be quick."



For sometime the farmer did not agree. But when the boy went on insisting, the farmer had to agree with him. He, having tied both of the hands of the boy with a rope, handed him over to the police. The farmer received fifty rupees.

A suit was filed against the boy for his escape from the prison. The farmer was called as a witness. The officer asked, "How did you catch the prisoner?" The farmer narrated the whole incident truly. Having heard this incident, the people were surprised and they, having made a collection of fifty rupees, gave this money to the farmer. The officer was pleased with the boy's kindness. The officer investigated his crime and found that his crime was insignificant. On the recommendation of the officer, the Government set him free and he won fame and reputation for his virtuous act.



Kind and Intelligent Viṭṭhala

Once in a city a house caught fire and in the twinkling of an eye the fire spread in the neighbouring houses. The people of the house could hardly come out and they were engaged in saving their money and property. After sometime the fire brigade arrived.

In a house the stair-case caught fire. So three men inspite of their best efforts, could not come out. At last they reached the top of the stair case. But if they had jumped from there, they would have lost their lives immediately. The people, standing on the path, saw them on the top of the house but they were helpless because there was no such a long ladder that could reach the top of the house.

Among those spectators there was also a twelve or thirteen year old boy who used to clean shoes. He saw this pitiable scene and he looked around. He saw a pillar of wires on the way. An



end of a wire of that pillar was tied to the top of that house with a hook. If the end of the wire fixed at the pillar was cut, the wire would hang from the top of the house to the earth by the side

of the house. He saw here and there and found an axe belonging to the fire brigade. He took the axe and climbed up the pillar holding the axe, and there he cut the end of the wire in a short time. Thus the wire hung down by the side of the wall of the house and all the three persons with the help of that wire came down one by one. Having perceived the striking idea of the boy and his sympathetic (kind-hearted) attitude, people were very much delighted and they applauded that boy. After that the three men, who were saved, awarded him a prize and expressed thankfulness to him. Then his photo with this report was published in the newspapers and his action was applauded much.

Thus a twelve or thirteen year old, poor boy could save the lives of three persons. A man may be poor but he can certainly perform an act of beneficence. This boy is a living example.



The Girl, Who Helped an Old Man

An old man was moving along the road with difficulty. The wind blew his cap off. Two school boys were passing by that way. The old man said to them, "The wind has blown off my cap. Kindly catch it, otherwise I shall remain without a cap." The boys, without taking any heed of what he was saying, enjoying themselves, laughed. In the meanwhile, a girl named Līlā, who studied in the same school, passed by that way. She, having run, caught the cap, dusted it with her cloth, wiped it and handed it over to the old man. Then the boys and the girl went to school. The teacher had seen this incident from the window of the school. Therefore, having taught the students, he narrated the incident to all the students, which he himself had seen through the window. He praised Līlā and reproached the two boys for their misbehaviour.

After that the teacher presented a book of beautiful pictures to that small girl and on the cover of the book it was written—

‘Presented this book to Līlā for her virtuous act, by the teacher.’

The boys, who laughed having seen the old man's cap blown off, were very much ashamed of themselves and they felt sad, when the prize was presented to the girl.





Grace, A Kind Girl

In the sea at several places there are rocks on small mountains which are not visible because they are under water. If ships strike against them, the ships are broken into pieces. On such rocks, a tower like high pillar is erected, and its top is fitted with a bright light, so that the crew at dark night may save the ship against collision. Such pillars are known as light- houses. In the lower part of the pillar, there are small rooms in which the family of the employee of the lighthouse lives.

Near England in the sea there was a lighthouse. An employee of that lighthouse one day went to England with a piece of work. It was by chance that that day there was a storm in the sea. In the light- house, his wife and fourteen year old daughter, named Grace Darling, were present. Suddenly at night a loud sound was heard as if a cannon was being fired. Grace and her mother understood that a ship was wrecked, colliding

against the rock in the storm. But in the dark night, while the sea was roaring, there was no way to save the passengers of the ship. Both the mother and the daughter, throughout the night, went on praying to God to protect the lives of the passengers of the ship.

In the morning when there was light, Grace with a telescope climbed up the lighthouse and saw all around. She saw that at a distance of nearly a mile from the lighthouse, the plank of the wrecked ship was floating and jumping on the waves of the sea and nine men were stuck to it in order to save their lives. That plank was likely to sink in the sea because of the risky waves.

Grace climbed down from the lighthouse hurriedly. She said to her mother, "I am going to save those nine men who are sitting on the wreckage at a distance of one mile."

Having heard her daughter's version, the mother was taken aback. The sea was roaring, and even the biggest ship could easily sink in such a roaring sea, while a girl wanted to sail a mile with her



boat. It was nothing but insanity. But one, who is burnt with compassion, does not give heed to one's own self, and gets peace of mind only when one rids others of their sufferings. Grace jumped into the boat. Her mother went on calling her but she did not give any heed to her warning. The poor mother began to see her daughter with unblinking eyes and prayed to God, from the core of her heart, for the safety of her daughter, by chanting His name.

Grace's boat tossed very high because of the risky waves but Grace was not at all worried for her life. She was overwhelmed by the resolve—"I have to save the lives of nine persons." She staked her life to save their lives. Before such girls all obstacles are crushed down and omnipotent Lord helps them. Grace's efforts bore fruit and she reached the wrecked plank, made the men board her boat and returned. When Grace's boat neared the lighthouse, her mother like a mad person ran crying, "My darling daughter" and embraced her.

The English boys even today narrate the story of Grace Darling's compassion and courage with pride. Such compassionate girls add lustre to the name of a country.



The Girl, Who Saved Railway Passengers

Near a village, there was a railway bridge over a rivulet. Near the bridge in a hut, a girl lived with her parents. In the rainy season one day in the evening, sitting by the window, she was waiting for her father. Then she saw the train running towards the bridge. She ran with a light in her hand and saw that the bridge was broken and the engine and the compartments had fallen into the rivulet. She thought that the next train would arrive and the passengers of that train would also meet the same fate. Therefore she must make efforts to save that train. With the firm resolve, that brave girl started for the station. The station was at a distance of one mile from that bridge. In between this bridge and the railway station there was another narrow wooden bridge. In such a stormy dark night, it was very dangerous



to move along that narrow bridge. She crossed that bridge very slowly, kneeling down and moving like a monkey, staking her life. Then she ran very fast. Her clothes got entangled in thorny bushes and were torn and she was also drenched. Even then somehow or the other she reached the

station as quickly as she could. She was badly panting. She said only "Stop the train, stop the train". She could utter no more words, and being deadly fatigued she fell on the ground. The train had already started but then the signal was given to stop the train. If she had not informed, all the passengers must have been killed.

Having conveyed the message, she saved the lives of hundreds of passengers. They were very much grateful to her. We can just imagine, how much the passengers, who were saved, must have rejoiced and how much happy the girl must have been.



A Beneficent Girl

In England John Middleton's wife had died. So in the family he and his daughter named May Middleton were left. He was a poor man. He earned his livelihood by working as a labour. His daughter helped him in his work. She herself did all household work.

May Middleton went to London on every Sunday and bought all the articles necessary for a week. One day when she was returning from London, she saw that a man, wearing dirty clothes, was lying by the road and was moaning. It seemed as if he were ill. May got down from her carriage. She gave the sick old man a lift and carried him home.

Though John Middleton was poor yet he was kind- hearted. He praised his daughter for her beneficence. Both the father and the daughter began to serve that old sick man. That old man was of an angry and peevish nature. He instead of expressing thankfulness to May, scolded and



rebuked her. But May, without minding his rebukes, served him very happily. By and by, the old man recovered from illness.

One day the old man came holding a small box in his hand and said to May, "Daughter! I have recovered from illness because you served me and helped me. Now I'll go home. Take this box."

The old man opened the box. It contained valuable ornaments. May was very much surprised because she thought that the old man was very poor. But having seen those ornaments she was not swayed by greed. She said, "Gentleman! My father and I have discharged our duty. It was our duty to serve a sick and suffering man. I'll not take your ornaments."

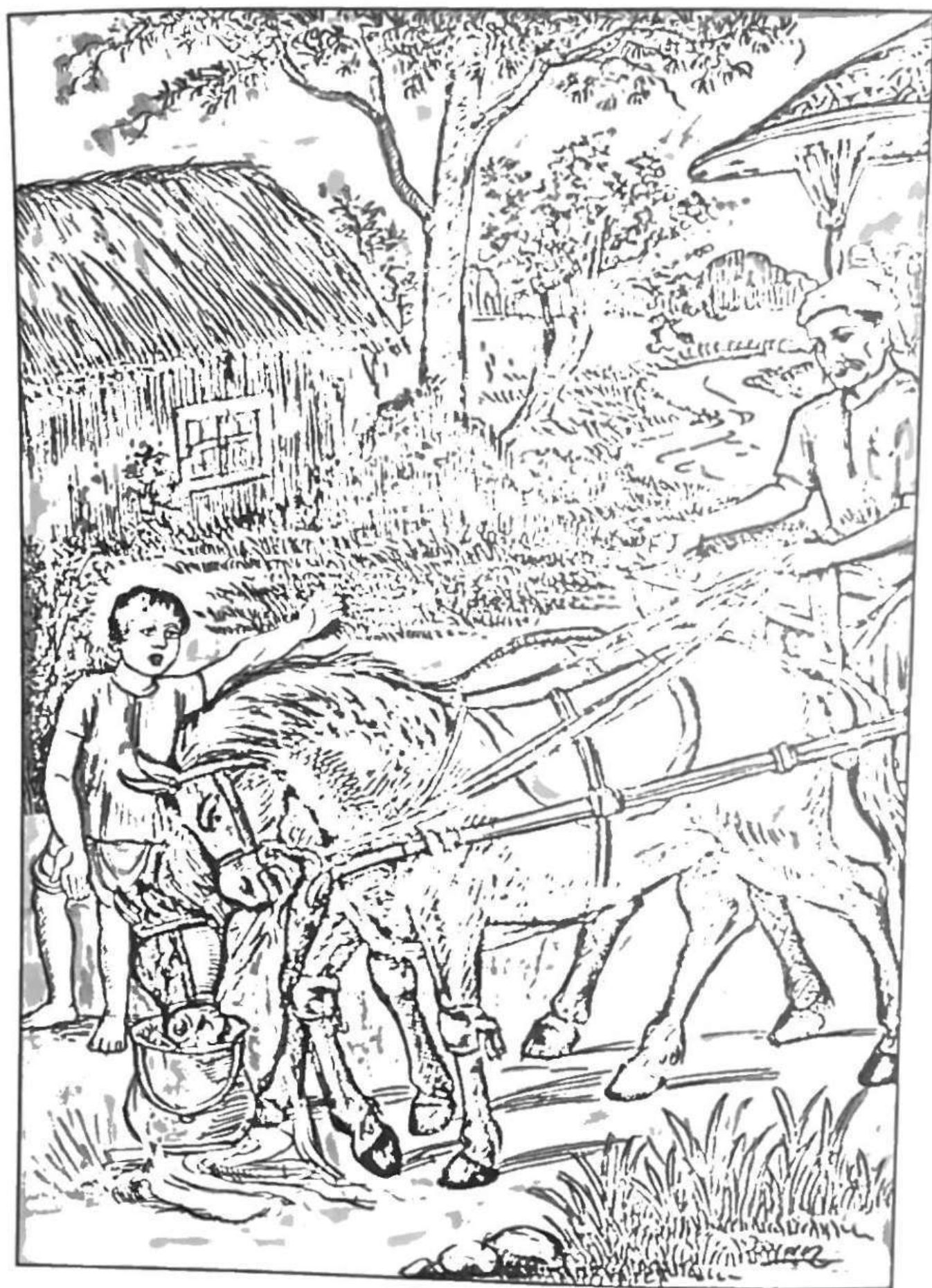
That old man silently went away from there that day. But before the old man died, he made a will that after his death, all his property would be handed over to May. He had no issue. May could know this fact after sometime that the old man had suddenly made her rich.



A Poor Lame Boy's Kindness

A person near a village, while driving his horse carriage slowly, was searching a water-reservoir, because his horses were very much tired and thirsty. All of a sudden he saw a small hut. In its courtyard, a ten or twelve year old boy was sitting. Having seen the horses tired and thirsty from a distance, that boy went into the hut and immediately brought a bucket full of water and stood on the road before the carriage arrived. The coachman, having reached there, stopped the carriage and asked that boy, "What do you want?" The boy replied, "I want nothing, I have come here to provide water to your horses." Having said so, he put the bucket full of water before the horses. Having drunk water, the horses were satiated.

After that the coachman took out some silver coins from his pocket and wanted to give to that boy. The boy said, "Gentleman! I have not provided water for getting money. I am a poor lame boy. My mother works in a field and earns



our livelihood. My mother says to me that whatever God does, He does only for our welfare. So if He has made me lame, it must be for a good

purpose. She has asked me to provide water to the thirsty men and animals and it is also a service to God because within eight miles there is no stream of water nor a village. I liked this suggestion of my mother and I started drawing water from the well and utilized it by providing it to hungry men and animals. I regard it as God's work and as my duty. I don't charge money for it."

When the coachman looked at the face of the boy, he saw at it, the radiance of beneficence and righteousness. Having seen the good conduct of the boy, the coachman was very much pleased and he began to think of the Lord's glory. After that the coachman, encouraging the boy and thanking him, went from there.

The coachman learnt a lesson that when even a poor and lame boy could be so generous and beneficent without any selfish motive, why he should not become generous and beneficent like him. So he also started doing good to others selflessly.

What a glory of beneficence!

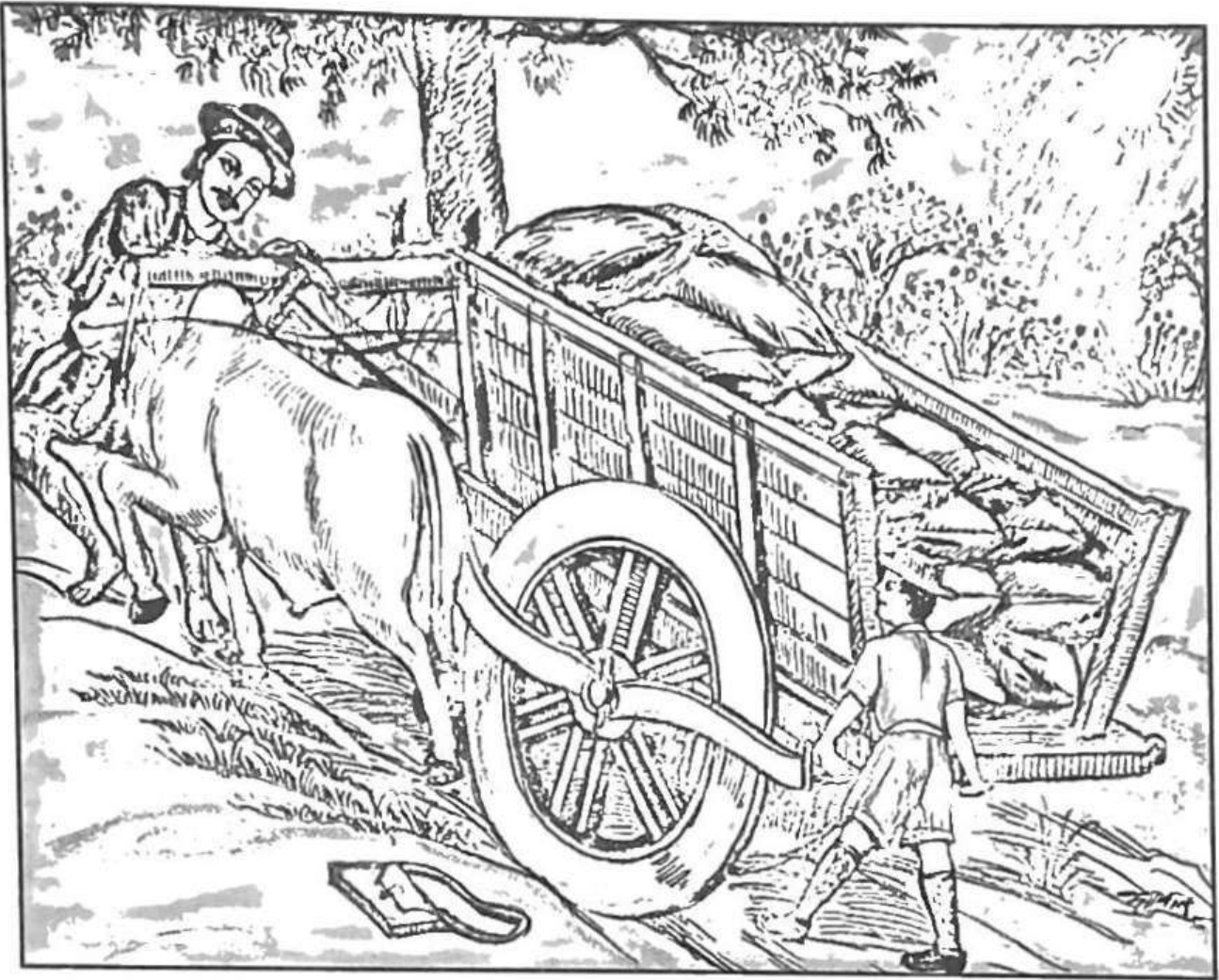


The Student, Who Helped the Cart-Driver

A student was going to a nearby school to study. A cart-driver said to him, "Please push this cart from the rear so that it may reach a higher level." "But it is time for school", having said so, the boy went away and began to play in the school.

The poor cart-driver, after sitting for a long time, got tired and he was also hungry, but no one came by that way. Only a boy passed by but he did not help him. "Now what should I do?" Having said so to himself, his eyes were filled with tears. In the mean- while a youngster named John Wilson passed that way. Having seen tears in the eyes of the cart-driver, the small boy took pity on him and said to him, "O dear brother, cart-driver, don't weep. I'll help you by pushing your cart to a higher level. Please stand up."

Having heard so, the cartman went ahead and caught the yoke. Wilson pushed the cart. Thus by pushing the cart to a higher level, he started going to school with a slate and books in his hands. Then he saw that the corn was falling from the



bag in the cart and he said to the cart man; "Brother! stop your cart. The corn is falling from your bag. Thrust something into the hole of the bag."

The cartman stopped the cart and seeing the hole in the bag, said, "I am very much thankful to you. May God bless you! If you had not told me, I, a poor man, would have sustained a great loss." Then the boy left for school.

The boy reached the school ten minutes late. He was always punctual. Therefore the teacher said to him, "Why are you late today? I pardon you today."

After that in the interval, all the boys began to play. While playing, the boy, who came to school without helping the cartman, said to the late comer, "Why have you come late? I know that you must have pushed the cart of the cartman and must have been paid for that. Therefore you did not disclose the fact to the teacher."

The second boy said, "I did not help the cartman for money." Hearing this, the first boy said, "I don't do any work without payment. He also requested me to push his cart but he did not tell me that he would make any payment. So I refused to help him. You are a fool that you did not take any payment."

The small boy said, "The poor cartman alone could not push his cart. It was my duty to help him. My parents have helped me, so I am alive. Therefore, I should also help others."

The gist of the story is that if we render service to others for payment, it is just like a trade. Therefore, we should render service to others without expecting any fruit in return.

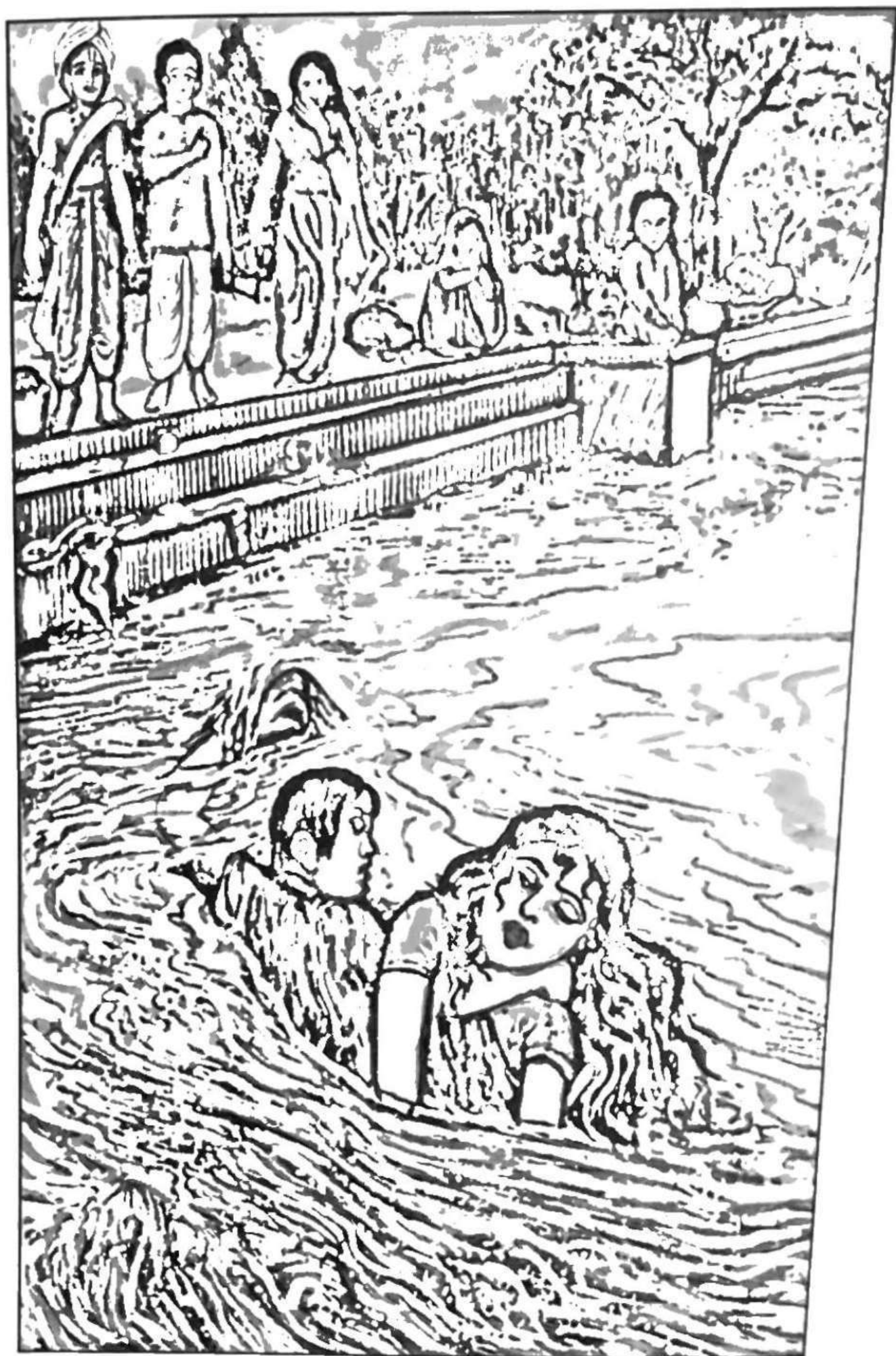


Rāma Rāva, A Beneficent Boy

The boy named Rāma Rāva was a member of the fifteenth Scout army of Bangalore. He was ten years old. One day he was standing on the bank of a river. A fifteen year old girl, belonging to the Devānga caste, was washing clothes there. While she was washing clothes, her foot slipped and she was going to be drowned in deep river. The boy named Rāma Rāva, without putting off his clothes, jumped into the river. He reached the girl in no time.

Rāma Rāva caught the drowning girl but his task was very tedious because the water was covered with moss and the girl was too heavy to be pulled by him. Moreover, his wet clothes were also causing an obstacle to him and thus he could not swim easily. Even then that daring and courageous boy remained busy with his task. He pulled the girl forcefully to the bank, though he himself was badly tired and while saving her, there was also the risk of his being drowned in the river. But staking his own life, he saved the life of the drowning girl.



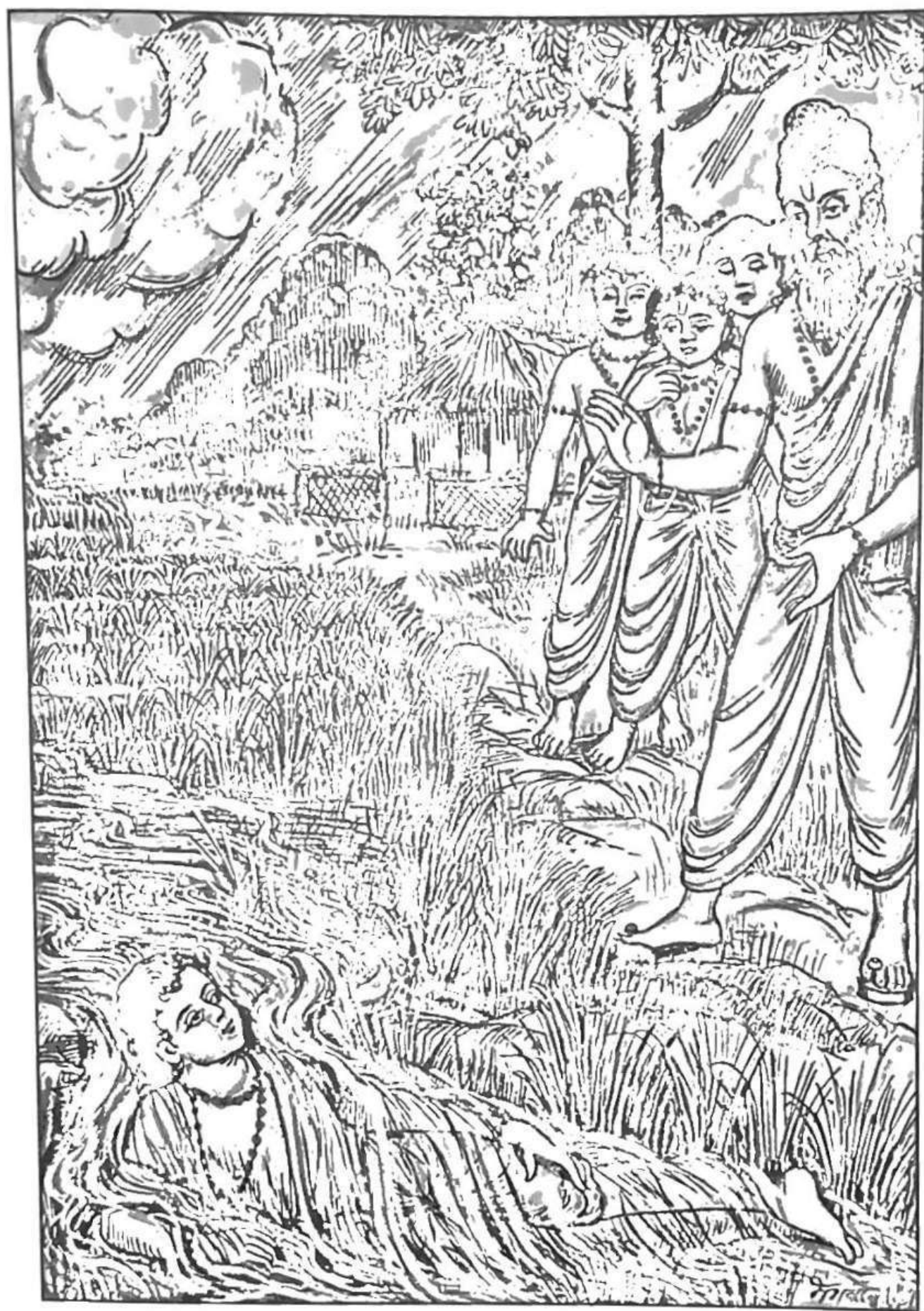


The Boy Āruṇi, Devoted to His Teacher

Out of all the disciples of the great sage, Āyodadhaumya, three are well reputed. They are Āruṇi, Upamanyu and Veda. Out of these three, Āruṇi was the most loving disciple of his teacher. It was he, who having received all learning, was first successful in establishing a seminary (hermitage) just like that of his teacher. By the grace of the teacher, he got mastery over the Vedas, the scriptures and the Purāṇas (historical records, 18 in number) etc., without study. The fact is that the knowledge, (learning) which is gained by serving the teacher, and by his grace, is successful in reforming life and it does good to others. The knowledge, which is gained by studying the books, without serving the teacher, enhances egoistic notion. That knowledge is not properly utilized.

In the great sage, Āyodadhaumya's seminary many disciples studied. All of them served their teacher with devotion. One day in the evening time, it rained heavily. There was no possibility of a rainfall in near future because the rainy season had ended. The great sage thought that, if the ridge of the paddy field was broken, because of an overflow of water, the water from the field would flow out and if it did not rain afterwards, the paddy field would dry up. So he said to Āruṇi, "Dear Āruṇi, go to the field and see that the water does not flow out of the field, if the ridge of the paddy field breaks (splits)."

Having obeyed his teacher, Āruṇi went to the field, having got drenched. There he saw that the ridge had split at a point and water was flowing out of the field freely. He wanted to mend the ridge, by putting earth (soil) in the hole that was made by splitting the ridge. But he was not successful in his effort because the water was flowing with such a force that its strong current swept away the soil. Then finally he himself lay down there and then the flow of the water stopped. Whole the night Āruṇi remained lying as the ridge of the paddy field. He felt cold, so his body



became stiff. But he neither moved his body a little nor took a turn. Though he was feeling much pain yet he remained lying silently.

In the morning after prayer and having offered oblation to the fire-god, all students prostrated at the feet of their teacher. The great sage Āyodadhaumya saw that other boys except Āruṇi were there. So the great sage asked students, “Where is Āruṇi?”

Students said, “Sir, last evening you sent him to the paddy field to mend its ridge. Since then he has not returned.”

The great sage, accompanied by other disciples, started in search of Āruṇi. While reaching the field, he called Āruṇi. Āruṇi had caught cold, so he could hardly respond to his teacher’s call. The great sage, having raised his obedient pupil up, embraced him and blessing him said, “Dear Āruṇi, you will gain all learning spontaneously without study.” It was by his teacher’s blessing that Āruṇi became a talented scholar.



Upamanyu's Devotion to His Teacher

The great sage, Āyodadhaumya was very well reputed for his learning, austerity and generosity. Outwardly he was very strict but inwardly he had much affection for his pupils. He wanted to make them very expert and competent. Therefore, the students, who were really inquisitive to gain knowledge, stayed with this great sage with a feeling of deep reverence. One of his pupils was Upamanyu. The teacher entrusted Upamanyu with the task of grazing his cows. The whole day he grazed cows and in the evening came back to the seminary (hermitage). One day the teacher asked him 'Dear Upamanyu! What food do you eat in these days?'

Upamanyu very humbly said, "Sir, I beg alms (food) for my livelihood viz., for the maintenance of my body."

The great sage said, "Dear boy! A celibate should not eat such food himself. A disciple

should first present the alms to his preceptor and then he should accept what his preceptor offers him.”

Upamanyu obeyed his teacher. Whatever alms he received, he presented it to his teacher. The teacher wanted to steady his pupil's faith. Therefore, he kept the alms himself without giving anything to Upamanyu. After some days the preceptor again asked, “Upamanyu, what do you eat these days?” Upamanyu said, “Having once presented the alms to my preceptor, I once again beg it for myself.” The great sage said, “It is unjustified to beg alms again because it will put a burden on householders; and other mendicant friars will hesitate in begging alms. Therefore don't beg alms the second time.”

Upamanyu said, “O.K. Sir!” So he stopped begging alms the second time. After sometime the great sage again asked him the same question. Then Upamanyu said, “I drink milk of cows.”

The great sage said, “It is not proper. The cows belong to their owner and therefore their milk also belongs to their owner. So you should not drink cows' milk without my permission.”

Upamanyu stopped drinking their milk. After some days the preceptor again asked, "Upamanyu! You don't beg alms the second time and also don't drink milk of cows. What do you eat? Your body does not appear to be lean and weak like the body of the person who fasts."

Upamanyu said, "Sir, I drink the froth that falls from the mouths of calves."

The great sage said, "Calves are very kind. They themselves must have remained hungry and must have felled more froth. This action of yours is also not justified."

Then Upamanyu began to fast. He went on grazing the cows in the forest without food. At last when the hunger was intolerable, he ate the leaves of Āka (a poisonous plant like wart). He became blind because his body was poisoned by the poisonous leaves. He could see nothing. Having heard the sound of the movement of cows, he moved following the cows. Once he fell into a waterless well. When it got dark, all cows returned but Upamanyu did not return, then the great sage was worried. He began to think that he did not allow him to take his meal in anyway, and so having suffered pain, he might have run



away. He went to the forest in search of him and called him again and again, "Dear Upamanyu! Where are you?" Upamanyu replied, while lying in the well, "Sir, I am lying in the well." The

sage went to the well and having heard all the details about Upamanyu's falling into the well, ordered him to offer praises to Aśvinī Kumāras (twin physicians of gods) by reciting the hymns of the Ṛga Veda. When Upamanyu offered praises with reverence in a hymn tune, then Aśvinī Kumāras, the gods' physicians were revealed in the well. With the help of those celestial physicians, his eye-sight recovered. They also offered him a 'Pūā' (a kind of sweet bread) and asked him to eat it. But Upamanyu didn't accept to eat it without offering it to his preceptor. Aśvinī Kumāras said, "Don't hesitate. Your preceptor also had eaten the 'Pūā' offered by us by regarding it as a gift from deities without offering it to his preceptor."

Upamanyu said, "He is my teacher, whatsoever he might have done, I'll not eat it, I'll not disobey my teacher." Aśvinī Kumāras were pleased with his devotion to his preceptor and they blessed him that he would gain all learning without study. When Upamanyu came out of the well, the great sage Āyodadhaumya embraced his loving disciple.



Uttanka's Devotion to His Preceptor

Great sage, Āyodadhaumya's disciple, great sage, Veda had suffered much pain in the seminary while studying as a celibate. Thinking of that pain, the great sage, Veda neither entrusted any task to his pupils nor engaged them in any service. His chief disciple was Uttanka. Once the great sage, Veda had to make a journey, so he ordered Uttanka to shoulder his full responsibility in his absence. The great sage's wife thought why her husband had entrusted the small boy with full responsibility of the seminary. So she wanted to put him to a test. She said, "Uttanka! The great sage ordered you to discharge all duties in his absence. I am in my menses. Therefore you should perform your duty by indulging in sex with me so that my mating period may bear fruit."

Uttanka reflected upon it and then very politely said, "Being the honourable wife of my worthy preceptor, you are my mother. I can even sacrifice

my life in order to please you by obeying you. But kindly don't order me to do such a sinful act. I am unable to do it."

Having perceived Uttanka's firm faith and self-control, his preceptor's wife was pleased. When the great sage, Veda returned, she narrated this incident to him because she wanted to put Uttanka to a test. Having heard this incident, the great sage blessed Uttanka and said, "Dear son! May all your ambitions be fulfilled! May God endow you with all learning without study!"

Then Uttanka expressed desire to pay honorarium to his preceptor. The great sage said to him to ask his wife for it. He went to her and she said, "Bring me the ear-rings, which discharge nectar, worn by the chaste queen of the King Pauṣya, another disciple of the great sage. I want to wear them on the day of festival." Only four days were left. Uttanka started for the king's palace to beg those ear-rings. Indra, the king of gods saw that the cobra named Takṣaka wanted to carry away those ear-rings and had been waiting for many days for an opportunity. He had no courage to take them



from the king's chaste queen. But if Uttanka took those ear-rings, then Takṣaka somehow or the other would certainly carry them away. Though Takṣaka was a friend of Indra, yet Indra, being the king of gods, thought it proper

to help Uttanka. Indra knew that, if a self controlled, austere, Brāhmaṇa (of the priest class) boy, who was devoted to his preceptor, could not pay the desired honorarium to his preceptor's wife, he would be very sad. He also knew that in that case, it would be very difficult to pacify the anger of such a virtuous (glorious) boy. He, by calling down a curse upon the Governor of a sphere, had the power to dethrone him. Therefore, Indra had already decided to help him. The queen gave Uttanka her ear-rings which were hardly available even to the deities. By fraud Takṣaka stole those ear-rings on the way but with the help of Indra, Uttanka went to the nether world, took those ear-rings back and offered them to his preceptors' wife. How can anyone deviate such a boy, in the entire universe from his resolve, who is completely self-controlled and firmly devoted to his preceptor?



Ekalavya's Devotion to His Preceptor

Hiraṇyadhanu's son named Ekalavya, belonging to the Niṣāda tribe, one day came to Hastināpura, and he prostrated at the feet of Droṇācārya who was the best teacher in archery and was also the teacher of Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas in Military Science. His garments bore the marks that he belonged to Niṣāda tribe. Droṇa asked him the reason of his coming, then he said, "I want to learn archery by sitting at your holy feet."

The teacher felt embarrassed. At that time Kauravas and Pāṇḍavas were boys and the teacher was imparting them education. The Princes would not like a Niṣāda boy to receive education with them and it was also not in accordance with their status. The teacher, Droṇa had committed himself before their grand uncle Bhīṣma to educate them in Military Science. Therefore he said, "Dear

son, Ekalavya! I am sorry that I can't impart you Military training with them as you are not twice-born."

Ekalavya had mentally accepted him as his teacher. So there was no question of his being angry with him or finding fault with him even mentally. That Niṣāda boy also did not lose heart. He again prostrated at the teacher's feet and said, "Sir, I have accepted you as my teacher. I don't want you to feel embarrassed. Be gracious to me."

Ekalavya instead of going back home, went to the forest and there he made a clay-idol of Droṇa and established it at a place. Having prostrated before that idol, he started the practice of archery. In fact, only God is the treasure house of knowledge. Where there are unfaltering faith and firm resolve, God Himself in the form of a preceptor or even without a formal preceptor, bestows upon such a pupil: the light of knowledge. For months together Ekalavya constantly went on practising archery and became a great archer.

One day Droṇa took his disciples, Pāṇḍavas and Kauravas to a forest for hunting so that

he could give them practice in archery. It was by chance that a dog accompanying them, wandering about, reached the vicinity of Ekalavya and seeing his black and strange garment began to bark. His hair had become long and his garment was the tiger skin. At that time he was practising archery. As the barking of the dog disturbed him, he filled its mouth by shooting seven arrows. The dog running, reached its master. All the persons were surprised to see that the dog was not hurt at all, but the arrows entered its mouth in such a way that it could not bark. It was indeed a great skill in archery. Having seen this skill of the archer, Arjuna was very much wonderstruck. He said to his preceptor, Droṇa, "Sir, you told me that you would make me the best archer on the earth but I am not so skilled in archery as he is."

Droṇa said, "Let us go and search the archer." By searching him, they reached his hut. Ekalavya prostrated at the feet of Droṇa. Droṇa asked him, "O gentle boy, who is imparted you such an excellent education in archery?"

Ekalavya humbly, with folded hands, said, "I am your humble pupil, Sir". He pointed out



towards the idol made of clay of his preceptor. The preceptor, Drona, after a little thought, said to him, "Will you not pay me honorarium?"

"Kindly, order me what honorarium I should pay", said Ekalavya rejoicingly.

Drona said, "I want the thumb of your right hand."

Though it was not possible to shoot arrows without the thumb of the right hand; and Ekalavya's satiation of desire, his hard labour and his constant practice in archery going all in vain without that thumb, yet that brave and courageous boy, who was devoted to his preceptor, without any regret and hesitation, cut the thumb of his right hand and presented it to his respected teacher.

The preceptor with a voice choked with emotion said, "Dear son, in the world there have been several expert and talented hands in archery and there will be many more, but I bless you that the high reputation of your great sacrifice will ever remain immortal "



Princes' Devotion to Their Teacher

The Caliph named Māmū^٢ had great respect for scholars. He engaged a learned teacher so that he might teach his two sons. One day when the teacher left his seat with a piece of work, immediately both the princes ran to put their teacher's shoes before him. Both of them reached at the same time. So they began to quarrel who would perform that virtuous deed. At last they decided that each of them would put one shoe before the teacher. So they did the same.

The Caliph heard this news and he sent for the teacher. Māmū^٢ asked the teacher, "Who is the most reputed and venerable person in the world?" The teacher replied, "Who can be more reputed than Māmū^٢, the master of Muslims?" Māmū^٢ said, "No, the most reputed is that man for putting whose shoes before him, the sons of the master of Muslims quarrelled together."

The teacher said, "I wanted to check the princes from doing so, but then the second thought came to my mind, why I should check their feeling of reverence." Māmū^٢ said, "Had you prevented them from doing so, I would have been very much displeased. This action has not dishonoured them but it indicates their noble descent and etiquette. The spirit of service towards the king, the father and the preceptor enhances reputation rather than lowering it."



Having said so, the Caliph gave each of his sons a prize of a thousand darahama (coins) for their devotion to their teacher and gave the prize of the same amount to the teacher for the discharge of his duty.



Śrī Gaṇeśajī

(He is adored first for his devotion to his parents)

There was a difference of opinions among deities, who should be worshipped first on the occasion of worship, religious sacrifice and offering oblation etc. Every deity coveted this honour. But they could not decide among themselves. Then they went to Brahmājī, because he is the father and grandfather of all beings; and good persons certainly obey their elders. Brahmājī listened to the deities and declared his judgment—“He who comes to me first of all, having gone round the earth, is the noblest and will be adored first of all.”

There was a scene of hustle and bustle among the deities. Someone jumped on his horse, someone on his elephant and someone jumped into his chariot and they all rode away. Someone rode fast on birds which were their vehicles. All tried their best to go round the earth for standing first. But Gaṇeśajī remained there thinking what to do, because his body was heavy, his belly was bulging

and his vehicle was a rat. After reflecting upon it, an idea struck his mind. He jumped on his rat and directly went to Kailāsa. No one had time to see towards him.

Having reached Kailāsa, he caught hold of his mother's hand and said, "Dear mother, kindly sit beside my father for a short time."

Pārvatī, having perceived her son's restlessness, laughingly said, "Why are you in such a haste? What is the matter?"

Gaṇeśajī said, "Mother, please, make haste. My father is meditating on God. He will not leave his seat. So kindly hurry up."

So his mother, Pārvatī, having perceived her son's earnest insistence, sat beside Lord Śaṅkara. Gaṇeśajī prostrated at his parents' feet and then went round them, riding his rat, seven times. Then again, having prostrated at his parents' feet, he rode away towards the abode of Brahmā.

When the deities reached the abode of Brahmā, they saw that Gaṇeśajī was sitting there. They thought that Gaṇeśajī was staying there because he must have thought that there were no chances for him to get victory, by



reaching there first of all. But all of them were wonderstruck, when Brahmājī explained to them that Gaṇeśajī would be worshipped first of all. One of the deities said to Brahmājī, “You told

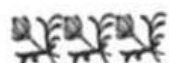
us that the deity, who having gone round the earth, reached there to you first, would be worshipped first of all.”

Brahmājī said, “You are right. But Gaṇeśajī, having gone round the earth and round all universes not only one or two times but seven times, came back here first of all.”

The deities began to look at each other—‘What is the matter? How is it possible?’

Brahmājī explained to them—“The mother is obviously an embodiment of the earth and the father is an idol of Lord Nārāyaṇa (Viṣṇu). All universes abide in Nārāyaṇa’s body.”

So the deities had nothing to say. They bowed to Gaṇeśajī. Faith in parents and devotion to them gave him the honour of being worshipped (adored) first of all.



Four Boys, Devoted to Father

In Dwārakā there was an ascetic of Brāhmaṇa family (Priest class) named Śiva Śarmā, well versed in the Vedas. He had five sons—Yajña Śarmā, Veda Śarmā, Dharma Śarmā, Viṣṇu Śarmā and Soma Śarmā. All of them were fully devoted to their father. Once Śiva Śarmā wanted to put the devotion of his sons to a test. He had achieved mastery (perfection) in wielding an incantation. Therefore with his illusive power, his wife suffered from fever and then died. Seeing their mother dead, the sons went to their father and asked him. “What should we do at the death of our mother?” He said to his eldest son, Yajña Śarmā—“With a sharp weapon cut the body of your mother into pieces and scatter the pieces here and there.” The son obeyed his father.

Śiva Śarmā said to his second son, Veda Śarmā, “Dear son, I can’t live without a woman. Go and bring here the woman, endowed with fortune and wealth, whom I have seen.”

Having obeyed his father, Veda Śarmā went to that woman and requested her to go to his father. That woman, who was manifested by his

father's illusive power, said, "Your father is old, he has a bad cough and he is also suffering from several other diseases, I don't wish to accept him as my husband. I like you. You are a handsome youngman endowed with virtues. What have you to do with that old man? Accept me. I'll fetch to you whatsoever you desire."

Veda Śarmā said, "Madam, you are my mother. You should not utter such sinful words. I am guiltless and devoted to my father. I'll give you whatever you want. I'll offer you even sovereignty over paradise but kindly accept my request, come to my father and do whatever is pleasing to him."

That woman wanted to have a vision of deities. Veda Śarmā, with the power of his penance, enabled her to have a vision of deities. Then the woman said to him, "If you want me for your father, offer your head to me."

Veda Śarmā happily said, "Today my life has become successful. I feel blessed that I have to sacrifice my life for my father." He beheaded himself with a sharp sword. She took his blood stained head before Śiva Śarmā. Śiva Śarmā's four sons, having seen their brother's blood stained head, said, "Out of us Veda Śarmā was fortunate because he sacrificed his life for his father."

Śiva Śarmā said to his third son, Dharma

Śarmā—"Dear son! Take the head of your brother and make your brother alive."

Dharma Śarmā took his brother's head and fixed it on his body. He, depending on the power of his father's devotion, penance and truth, invoked the god of death. The god of death appeared and his brother, Veda Śarmā came to life. The god of death expressed desire to grant Dharma Śarmā a boon. He asked a boon for unfaltering devotion at the feet of his father, love for righteousness and salvation after death. By granting the boon, the god of death disappeared. Then Dharma Śarmā and his brother went to their father.

Śiva Śarmā said to his fourth son, "Dear son, I with my beloved, want to drink nectar which may rid us of all diseases. Go to heaven and bring nectar from there."

Having obeyed his father, Viṣṇu Śarmā, with the power of his penance, started for heaven, passing through the sky. Having seen him coming, Indra, the king of deities, sent nymph named Menakā to cause an obstacle in his mission. That very beautiful nymph of heaven, with full make up, sitting on a swing, began to swing to and fro and also began to sing a song in a very melodious voice. Viṣṇu Śarmā passed that way but he did not cast even a glance at her. Having seen him

going ahead, the nymph said, “O great intellectual boy! Where are you going in such a haste? I want to seek refuge in you. It is your duty to protect me.”

Viṣṇu Śarmā said, “O beautiful woman! I know your intention. You brought great sage Viśvāmitra’s penance to naught; but I am devoted to my father, your magic can’t affect me. I have to do the task entrusted to me by my father. Use your magic on someone else.”

Having reached heaven, Viṣṇu Śarmā demanded nectar. But Indra, the king of gods instead of giving nectar, caused several obstacles. Having annihilated all obstacles with his penance and glory, Viṣṇu Śarmā thought, “If Indra does not agree to my proposal, I’ll dethrone him and enthrone another person as Indra.”

At that time, the king of gods came with a jug of nectar. He bowed to Viṣṇu Śarmā and craved forgiveness for his offence. Then Viṣṇu Śarmā, having taken that nectar, went to his father. Śiva Śarmā had no need of nectar at all. He only wanted to put his son to a test. So he called his sons and said to them, “I am pleased with you. Ask any boon, you want.”

Having listened to their father, they said, “May our mother come back to life!” Śiva Śarmā said,



“So it will be.” As soon as he said so, their mother appeared there and she said, “A virtuous woman wants a virtuous son. Those parents are very fortunate whose sons behave according to

their family traditions and who liberate their family and parents from worldly bondage. All my sons are devoted to father, they are righteous, ascetic, glorious, valiant and are performers of religious sacrifice—therefore I am very fortunate.”

Śiva Śarmā again asked his sons to ask a boon. All his four sons said, “Father, if you are pleased with us, send us to the Abode of God, from where there is no return to this mortal world.”

Śiva Śarmā said—“All of you are totally sinless and are devoted to me, therefore by your power of devotion to father, go to the Abode of God.” As soon as Śiva Śarmā said so, Lord Viṣṇu manifested Himself sitting on His vehicle, Garuḍa, holding a conch, a discus, a mace and a lotus in each of his four hands. Lord Viṣṇu wanted to carry Śiva Śarmā, his wife and all his sons to His Abode; but Śiva Śarmā expressed his desire to send his four sons only to His Abode. It was by the power (glory) of their devotion to their father, that Śiva Śarmā’s four sons went to the Lord’s Eternal Abode with Him.

Soma Śarmā, Devoted to Father

When Śiva Śarma's four sons had gone to the Abode of God, then he gave the jug of nectar to his youngest son, Soma Śarmā, asked him to protect it and he with his wife went for pilgrimage. For ten years, he continually underwent penance. Righteous Soma Śarmā without any negligence, protected the jug of nectar carefully. After ten years Śiva Śarmā returned. He with his wife assumed the forms of lepers. They were suffering from wasting leprosy and they appeared mere lumps of flesh. Having seen his parents, Soma Śarmā fell on their feet. He was very sad with their sufferings. He cleaned their wounds well and made them sit on soft bed sheets.

Soma Śarmā served his leper-parents with great devotion. He rendered scavenging service by washing excrement (waste matter), urine and phlegm. He cleansed and pressed their feet with

his hands. He made arrangements for their residence, bath and food etc., very carefully. Righteous Soma Śarmā put them on his shoulders and carried them for pilgrimage. In spite of remaining busy with his daily ceremonial routine (worship and prayer etc.), offering of oblation into the sacred fire, offering water and rice balls to manes and adoration of God etc., he rendered service to his parents with full devotion. He provided wholesome food, beautiful clothes and fragrant betel leaves to his parents. He brought fruits, flowers and milk etc., as his parents liked and always tried his best to please them. In spite of this behaviour, his father, Soma Śarmā uttered very harsh and pinching words to him. He time and again admonished him, humiliated him and also beat him with a baton. But Soma Śarmā never got angry. He ever worshipped his father with mind, speech and action.

After putting him to tests for a longtime, Soma Śarmā's father was pleased with him. Then with his deluding potency, the nectar from the jug disappeared and he said to his son, "Dear



son, I gave you the nectar which is a preventive medicine for diseases. Bring it to me because I want to drink it.”

Soma Śarmā saw the jar of nectar and found that there was not even a single drop of nectar

in it. Having seen it, he offered a mental prayer, "If I am endowed with truth and the spirit of service to my teacher, if I have undertaken penance with a pure heart, if I have ever controlled my senses and if I have never shown any slackness in the performance of my duty with a pure heart, this jug may be filled with nectar." Having offered this silent prayer, as the fortunate boy, Soma Śarmā looked at the jug, he found it full to the brim. Very happily he took it to his father.

Being pleased with his dutiful and righteous son, Śiva Śarmā with his wife, having discarded that leper form, assumed the form of healthy persons as it was before. Soma Śarmā prostrated at the feet of his parents. Śiva Śarmā with the power, acquired through his penance and asceticism, with his wife and son attained the Supreme Abode of Lord Viṣṇu.

The Boy Sukarmā, Devoted to Father

Born in the family of great sage, Kaśyapa, the best among Brāhmaṇas, Pippala was a very righteous ascetic. Control over senses and mind, and piousness were his natural virtues. In the Daśa-forest where he undertook penance, by the influence of his penance, even the wild beasts and other beings, having become free from the feelings of hostility for each other, lived with love and peace. He undertook such an austere penance that black and white ants made their holes all around his body and covered his body with soil. Out of the heap of soil such a lustre radiated as if the flames of fire were coming out. Being pleased with his penance, the gods appeared before him and granted him the boon that the entire world would be brought under his control.

With the power of this boon, the person, he thought of, was under his control. He became very much proud of his accomplishment. He regarded himself as the greatest ascetic and most perfect soul in the world. The pride of his accomplishment proved to be an obstacle to God-Realization. Seeing his pride and for showering grace on him,

Brahmājī himself, having assumed the form of a crane, appeared before him and said to him, “O Brāhmaṇa (a member of the priest class), why are you proud of your accomplishment that no one is equal to you in the world? Though you have undertaken penance for three thousand years and you have gained accomplishment to bring others under your control, yet you are a fool. You don’t know what unmanifest Divinity is! Kuṇḍala’s son, Sukarmā is a scholar. He knows the distinction between Unmanifest and Manifest Divinity. Pay attention to what I say. In the entire world there is no such a great scholar as Sukarmā. Though he neither offered charity nor meditated on God, nor offered oblation, nor performed sacrifice, nor went for a pilgrimage, nor served his preceptor, yet he has knowledge of all scriptures. He serves his parents from his heart and it is because of his sincere service that he has gained such a knowledge which you don’t have.”

Having listened to the crane, Pippala started to meet Kuṇḍala in his hermitage at Kurukṣetra. Having reached there, he saw that Sukarmā was engaged in serving his parents. Having seen Pippala coming to him, he welcomed him with open arms, offered him a seat and washed his feet. Then Sukarmā told him that the crane had sent him to him. He told Pippala that Brahmā had

come to him, assuming the form of a crane, in order to dispel his pride. Pippala was still somewhat proud of his accomplishment. So Sukarmā thought of the deities. The deities such as Indra etc., appeared there. The vision of deities never goes in vain. When the deities asked him to ask a boon, he said, "Grant me the boon of having unfaltering devotion at the feet of my parents and let my parents attain the abode of Lord Viṣṇu". Having granted him the boons, the deities went to heaven. Then Pippala had faith in Sukarmā's power. So he requested Sukarmā to explain to him the unmanifest and manifest forms of the Supreme Soul.

Sukarmā said, "I first explain to you the unmanifest form of God. Deities such as Indra etc., and the entire universe get deluded with this form. That Absolute, the master of the entire animate and inanimate world, pervades everywhere and He is omnipresent. No one can see this all-pervading form. The Vedas also declare that He is indescribable. He is devoid of eyes, ears, mouth etc., but He is the onlooker of all beings and their actions. He hears their sound, knows all smells and is the supreme enjoyer of all fruits. In spite of being devoid of hands and feet, he performs actions and runs all around. That Supreme soul is all pervading, pure and perfect

and also bestows perfection upon others. This is God's all pervading, unmanifest form."

Then Sukarmā explained His manifest form and said, "When Brahmā, the soul of all beings, having destroyed all beings, gets established in God, then God having merged him in Him, sleeps on a thousand headed serpent known as 'Śeṣanāga'. At the end of annihilation, when He awakes from sleep, then from His navel a brilliant lotus is revealed. From that lotus Brahmājī was born. From Brahmā, the deities like Indra etc., and governors of different spheres and animate and inanimate world emanated. This cosmic (Universal) Form is God's manifest form."

Pippala asked Sukarmā, "You are not an aged man and it seems that you have not undergone any penance but your influence (glory) and knowledge are limitless. What is the reason?"

Sukarmā said, "I have neither performed any religious sacrifice nor righteous ceremony nor I have gained knowledge nor went on a pilgrimage nor I have done any virtuous deed. I serve my parents only. I remain engaged in serving them day and night without any negligence and indolence. So long as my parents are alive, I am getting the golden rare opportunity to serve them, so I have nothing to do with undergoing penance or going on pilgrimage or doing other virtuous deeds. I

have reaped the fruit, which learned persons reap by performing sacrifice etc., by serving my parents. For a son the residence of his parents is the place of pilgrimage such as the Ganges, Gayā and Puṣkara etc. The great sages and the deities get pleased with the obedient son who serves his parents. The three worlds get pleased with such a son. The son, who washes the feet of his parents, gets fruit of daily bath in the Ganges. He, who worships his parents, by providing them wholesome eatables, comfortable clothes and betel leaf and other necessary articles, becomes omniscient. O best of the Brāhmaṇas! The son, who gives bath to his parents, the drops of water that fall from their bodies on the body of the son, with those drops, he reaps the fruit of bathing in all places of pilgrimage. If a son serves his parents even though they are degraded, old, diseased, deadly-hungry, incapable and leprous, God gets pleased with him. He attains the eternal abode of God which is very rare even to ascetics. All virtuous deeds such as sacrifice, penance, charity etc., go in vain of the person who does not hold his parents in reverence. For a son, his parents are—righteousness, pilgrimage, salvation, sacrifice, charity and the best fruit of his life.

He, who renounces his crippled, poor, old, sad parents suffering from epidemic diseases, that evil



souled son is hurled into the foul hell full of germs and insects. The foolish son, who does not go to them, when they call him, becomes a pig in a village and eats excrement and then takes birth as a dog a thousand times. He, who eats food himself without offering to parents, is born

a hateful dung-beetle, a thousand times and eats excrement. He, who utters hard words to his parents, is reborn as a tiger and then a bear. The wicked person who does not bow to his parents, resides in Kumbhīpāka hell for a thousand ages.”

At last Sukarmā said, “For a son there is no other place of pilgrimage more important than his parents. Parents are like Lord Viṣṇu here as well as hereafter. I remain engaged in serving my parents daily, therefore the three worlds are under my control. The reason of my omniscience is my service to my parents. He, who does not serve his parents, is not benefited either by the thorough study of the Vedas or by undergoing penance, performing sacrifice, offering charity and worshipping God. He who does not respect his parents, all his meritorious deeds are in vain. Parents are all-in-all—sacrifice, charity, penance, pilgrimage and salvation for the son.”

Sukarmā also narrated some other episodes to Pippala. Listening to his gospel, Pippala’s pride was dispelled. He felt ashamed of his past pride. Seeking permission from Sukarmā and bowing to him, he went to heaven.

The Boy Pippalāda, Devoted to Father

The demon, Vṛtra possessed heaven. Indra, the king of deities, with deities, fled from heaven. The weapons and missiles of the gods could not kill Vṛtra. At last Indra with his penance and prayer pleased God. God told him that if Viśvakarmā, the architect, made a thunderbolt with the bones of the great sage Dadhīci, then Vṛtra could be killed. Dadhīci was a great sage and because of his austere penance all creatures and even trees revered him. Since the gods in no way were able to kill the glorious sage, therefore they requested him to donate his bones.

The great sage, Dadhīci said, "This body will certainly perish one day or the other. Therefore it is good, if it used for the welfare of others. I am giving up this body with my ascetic power, you can take the bones."

He departed from the body with his Yoga and attained salvation. Viśvakarmā made a thunderbolt with his bones. Indra killed the demon, Vṛtra with this thunderbolt and the gods regained heaven.

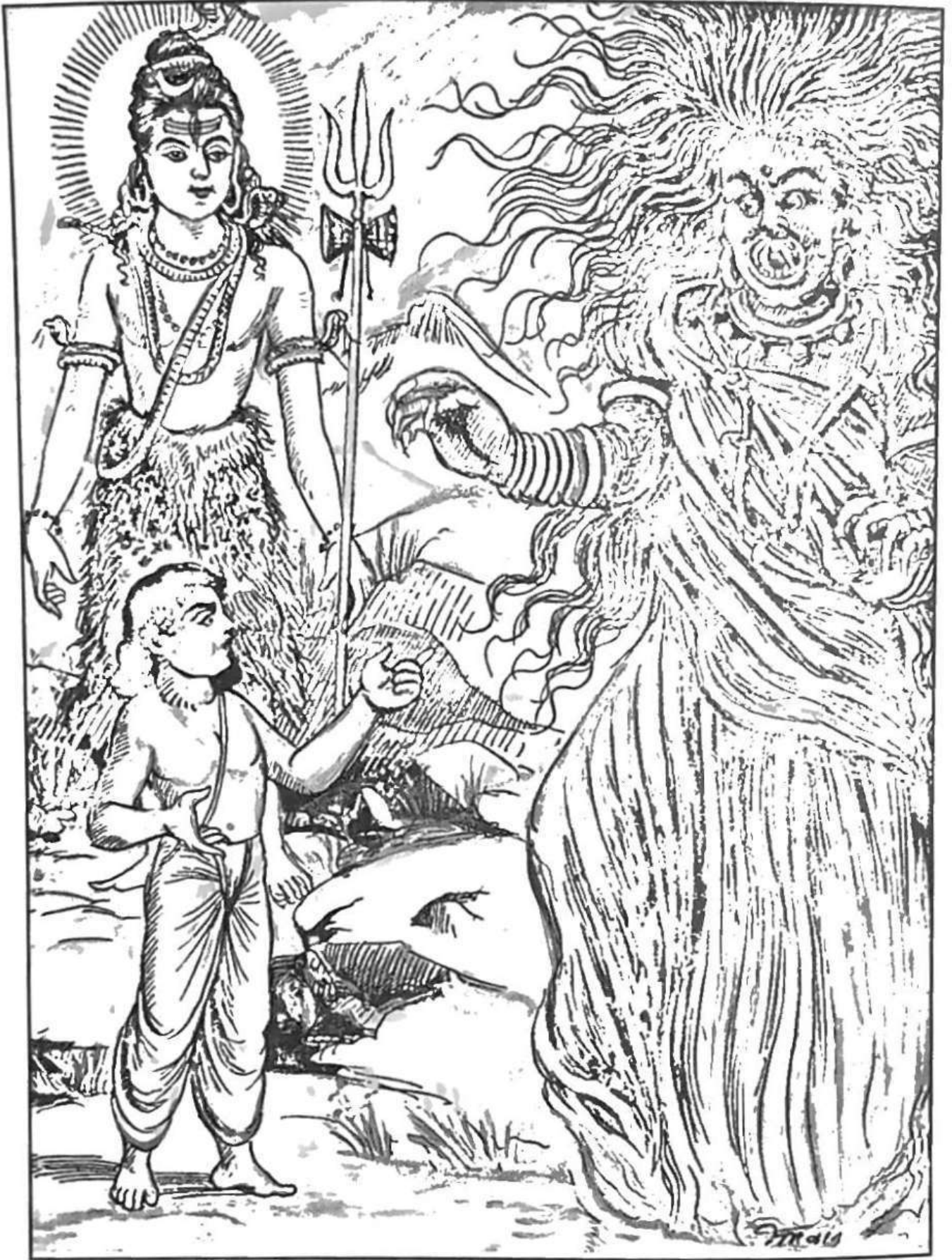
The name of the wife of the great sage Dadhīci was Prātithēyī. The couple had a son who was a great ascetic. He ate only the fruit of Pīpala, so he was named Pippalāda. When Pippalāda

came to know that his father died, because he gave his bones to the deities on their demand, he got angry. He thought to avenge his father's death upon the gods.

For this purpose, he started worshipping Lord Śaṅkara to undertake penance. He undertook penance for a long time and then Lord Śaṅkara was pleased and He revealed Himself. Śaṅkara told him to ask a boon. Pippalāda said, "Give me such power that I may destroy the killers of my father."

Lord Śaṅkara produced a terrific female-demon and handed her over to Pippalāda. That female-demon asked Pippalāda what she should do for him. Pippalāda said, "Eat all the deities." That female-demon, with her wide open mouth, wanted to devour Pippalāda. Pippalāda asked her, "Why do you want to devour me?" She said, "The gods abide in the limbs of beings as the sun abides in eyes, Indra abides in hands and Varuṇa (sea-god) abides in the tongue and similarly other gods abide in other limbs. The gods in heaven live at a long distance from here. Therefore I should first eat those who are near me. Out of all of them, you are the nearest."

Pippalāda was very much terrified and he took refuge in Lord Śaṅkara. Lord Śaṅkara said to Pippalāda, "Son, anger is an evil. If I check this female-demon from devouring you, she'll devour other beings. So you will incur sin of killing them. Suppose she kills all the gods of heaven, the entire world will be destroyed because the sun is the



god of eyes, without the Sun, all people will become blind. Similarly Indra is the god of hands, if Indra is killed, no one will be able to shake hands. In the same way other limbs also function

with the power of other gods. If the gods are killed, the limbs will stop functioning. Therefore don't be angry with the gods. The gods requested your father to offer them the bones of his body. Your father was a donor and benefactor and so he offered even his bones to them. You are the son of such an exalted soul. You should not be angry with those gods who went as beggars before your father."

Having listened to Lord Śaṅkara's gospel, Pippalāda's anger was dispelled. He said, "O Lord! Having obeyed you, I forgive the gods." Then the female-demon went away.

Being pleased with Pippalāda's forgiving nature, Śaṅkara granted him the boon that the place, where Pippalāda undertook his penance, would become the place of pilgrimage and would be known as 'Pippala Tīrtha' and the people, bathing in that place of pilgrimage, being free from all sins, would go to the abode of God.

Pippalāda had a desire to see his father. With the prayer of the gods, the great sage Dadhīci and Pippalāda's mother, Prātitheyījī, came there by an aeroplane from the abode of sages and they gave their blessings to Pippalāda.

Afterwards Pippalāda became a great and talented scholar and also a seer of the Spiritual Reality (Knowledge Divine). There is description of his character in 'Prašnopaniṣad' and 'Śiva Purāṇa'.

Śravaṇa Kumāra, Devoted to Parents

Śravaṇa Kumāra was Vaiśya by caste. His parents had become blind. He served them with great care, caution and faith and tried his best to satiate all their desires. His parents expressed their desire to go on a pilgrimage. He prepared a 'Kāvāra', a load carrying device with baskets and by putting his parents into it and carrying them on his shoulders, he went on a pilgrimage. If a Brāhmaṇa goes on a pilgrimage for his livelihood, there is scriptural ordinance for begging. But the people of other castes are not allowed to beg, but they should accept, whatever people offer of their own accord to them. But Śravaṇa Kumāra brought some edible roots and fruits from the forest which served as their food for they would not accept the food offered by others. While travelling, Śravaṇa Kumāra reached Ayodhyā, carrying his parents. At night his parents felt thirsty. Śravaṇa Kumāra, having taken his gourd, went to the bank of Sarayū to



bring water.

So long as a man protects righteousness vigilantly, righteousness protects him from all calamities. But when out of heedlessness,

righteousness is not properly observed, then some error is certainly committed which brings about an adverse result. It is ordained by theology that besides the battlefield, it is a sin to kill an elephant. The second ordinance is that a weapon or a missile should not be used merely by guess without pre-determination. At that time emperor, Daśaratha all alone went for hunting. In those days in the nearby forest of Ayodhyā there must have been wild elephants. When Śravaṇa Kumāra immersed his gourd in water, it caused sound. Having heard the sound, the emperor thought that an elephant was drinking water. So he shot such an arrow that follows the track of a sound. First the arrow was shot by mere guess and secondly an elephant was not to be shot as hunting an elephant is forbidden. The arrow struck Śravaṇa Kumāra's chest and he fell down screaming and moaned.

When the emperor, having heard the sound, reached there, he saw that an innocent boy, wearing bark, was lying on the ground. His tresses were scattered, his gourd (vessel for holding water) had fallen down and his body was badly stained with dust and blood. Having seen the emperor he said, "O King! I did not cause any

offence to you, why have you wounded me by shooting an arrow? My parents are weak and blind. I came here to take water for them. They must be waiting for me. They don't know that I am lying here in such a pitiable state. Even if they come to know this fact, they can't come here by moving. I am not afraid of death but I am sad for my parents. Kindly convey this message to them and quench their thirst by supplying water to them."

Emperor Daśaratha was grief-stricken and restless. Śravaṇa told him the whereabouts of his parents and also the way to approach them. He also consoled him by saying that the emperor would not incur the sin of killing a Brāhmaṇa because he was Vaiśya by caste. But the arrow in his chest was causing much pain to him. So he should pull it out.

When the arrow was pulled out, Śravaṇa died in writhing pain. Then emperor Daśaratha, repenting of his sin, filling the gourd with water, went to Śravaṇa's parents. Having reached there in a choked voice he somehow mentioned his crime. Hearing this sad news, Śravaṇa's parents lamented the death of their son. While lamenting, they said to the emperor, "Carry us to the dead body of

our son.” The emperor carried them up to their son. At that time the emperor saw that Śravaṇa, by reaping the fruit of the service rendered to his parents, assumed the divine form and was going to heaven in an aeroplane. He, consoling his parents, said, “I have met this noble end by the service rendered to you. Don’t grieve for me. You will also come to me quickly.”

After that Śravaṇa’s dead body was put on a heap of fire wood. His parents, having bathed in the Sarayū, offered a handful of Sarayū-water to their son, then falling down into the funeral pyre, departed from their bodies. At last, being very much grief stricken, they called down a curse upon the emperor, “May you also be bereaved of your son in the same way as we are bereaved of our son!”

Śravaṇa’s parents also went to the higher world (heaven) because of the virtuous deed of their son. Thus it was the glory of Śravaṇa’s service to parents that Śravaṇa Kumāra as well as his parents, attained heaven, the abode of God.

The Boy Bhīṣma, Devoted to Father

By the curse of the great sage Vasiṣṭha, the eight Vasus had to take birth as human beings. They pleased Gaṅgājī by praying to her to become their mother. Gaṅgājī accepted Śāntanu, son of the king Pratīpa born in the Puru family as her husband. She married Śāntanu on the condition that she would go away, if he interfered in her affairs. She threw the son, who was born, into her current. The king Śāntanu did not utter a word lest she should go away. When she had dropped seven sons into the water and the eighth son was born, then the king said to her, “You have killed my seven sons, give this son to me.”

Gaṅgājī said, “These children were Vasus. They had to take birth as human beings because of the curse. I have sent them back to their abode. This eighth child is also a Vasu, but it was because of the offence committed by him that they were under a curse. He will live here in the

human world for a long time. You have violated the rule by interfering in my affair. Therefore I am going away. When he grows old, he'll come to you." Having taken that boy, Gaṅgājī disappeared.

One day King Śāntanu was walking along the bank of Gaṅgājī. He saw that only a little water remained in Gaṅgājī. He wanted to know its reason, so he went ahead and saw that a stately boy was practising the use of divine weapons. He stopped the current of Gaṅgājī with his arrows. Gaṅgājī revealed herself and told the king that the boy was his eighth son. The king took the boy with him and named him Devavrata. The great sage Vasiṣṭha imparted him entire knowledge of the Vedas. Śukrācārya, the preceptor of demons and Bṛhaspati, the preceptor of gods taught him Political Science and Lord Paraśurāma imparted him training in archery.

One day emperor Śāntanu was walking along the bank of Yamunā. He smelt a superb smell. He went in search of the source of the sweet smell. Satyavatī's body was emitting that smell. Having seen Satyavatī, he was captivated by her beauty and he wanted to marry her. A Niṣāda (man of a primitive tribe of India) had brought

her up. When emperor Śāntanu put this proposal, the Niṣāda said, "I can accept your proposal only, if you promise that her son would be the heir to the throne." Though emperor Śāntanu was infatuated with that pretty woman, yet he did not accept to deprive his modest, courteous and worthy son, Devavrata of his right to the throne and he came back.

The emperor Śāntanu came back, but his heart was set on Satyawatī. He was grieved, and thinking of her he became feeble. Devavrata came to know the reason of his father's grief through ministers and royal servants. He took elderly Kṣatriyas (people of warrior class) with him and went to the Niṣāda and requested him to offer his daughter to his father. The Niṣāda said, "She is not my daughter. She belongs to a high royal family as yours. Her father has left her here so that I may rear her because he has gone to undertake penance. He also has the desire that she should be married to your father, but in this connection I have to say that if she is married to your father, her sons will be your rivals; and not to speak of them, even the gods, having rivalry with you, can't live alive."

Devavrata said, "I promise that her son will



be the heir to the throne.”

The Niṣāda was not satisfied with this promise.

He said, "O Prince! Your promise suits to such a virtuous man as you, but I am afraid that your son will set up a claim to the throne."

Devavrata thought a bit and, raising up his hand, said, "I had already promised to renounce the kingdom for my father and now I promise that I'll observe celibacy throughout my life." Having heard his promise, flowers were showered from the sky. The gods, because of such a 'Bhīṣma' (terrible) promise, named him Bhīṣma.

When Bhīṣma handed over the Niṣāda's daughter to his father; Śāntanu, blessing him, said, "So long as my sinless son wants to live alive, he will remain alive, death would not touch him. When he will like to die of his own will, then and then only he will die."

Bhīṣma remained steady in his firm resolve throughout his life. In the war of Mahābhārata when he fell down on the bed of arrows and his whole body was badly wounded with arrows, yet he did not die. It was because of the boon granted by his father that he departed from the body at his own will at the time of the northward course of the sun.

The Boy, Who Sacrificed Life for His Mother

In 1880, there was a terrible famine in Orissa. People were dying of starvation. In a poor family there was a man who lived with his wife and two sons. When in the house, no food was left, and the man could not get any job as a labourer, he could not bear the scene of his wife and children suffering from starvation. So he left home and went away somewhere. The poor woman, having sold the utensils and clothes of the house, fed her sons. When nothing was left in the house, she began to beg meals. Whatever she got by begging, she fed her children and she ate the remnants, and if nothing remained, she slept after drinking water only.

After some days the woman fell ill. Then the ten year old son went for begging. But whatever he got, was not sufficient to satisfy the hunger of these three persons. When the elder son went for begging, there was no one to look after the small boy because the mother lay unconscious because of high fever. He went astray starving and one day he died of starvation.

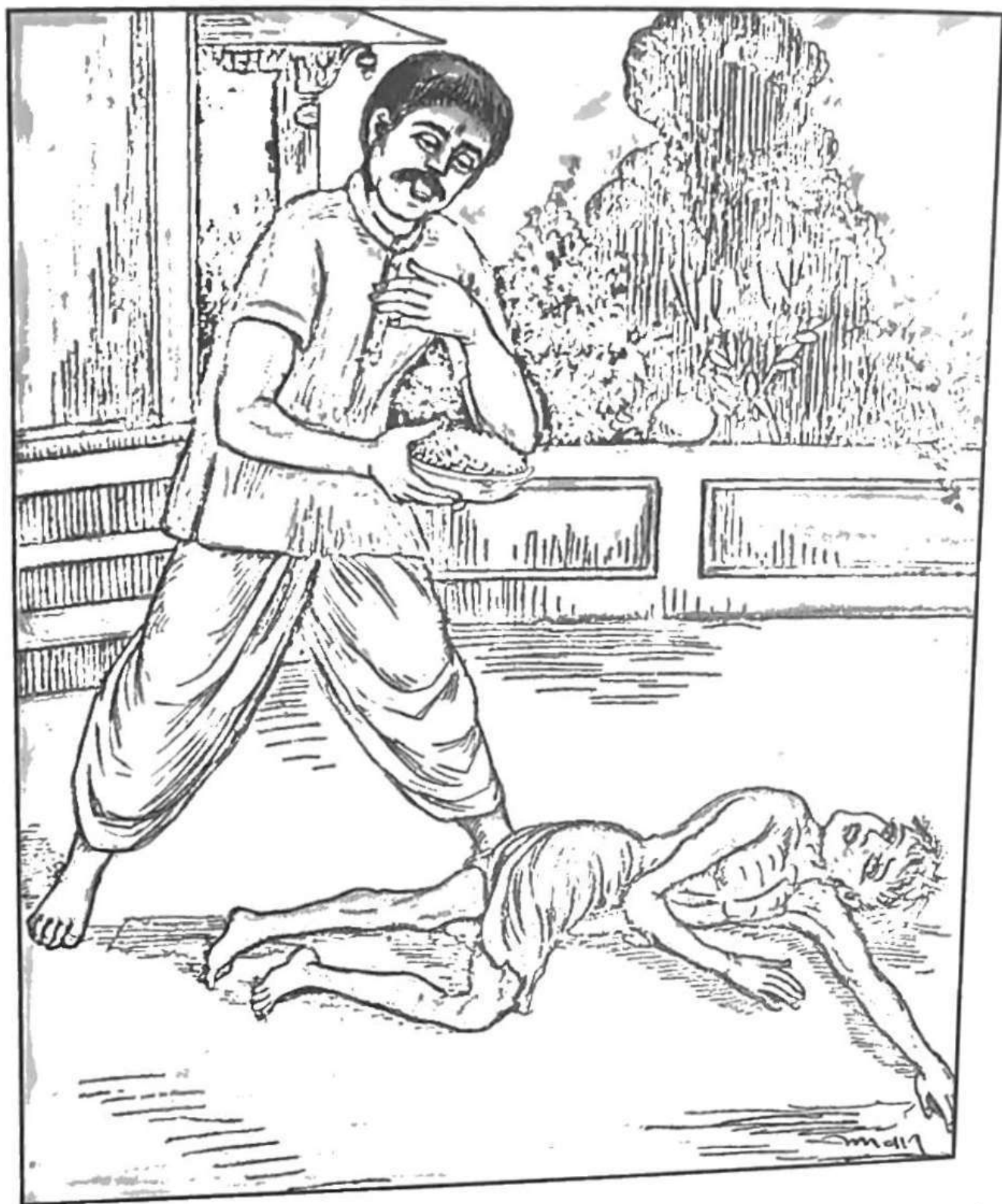
By begging, whatever the son got, he offered it to his mother and he ate nothing for several days. One day he went for begging. But no one gave him anything. In the afternoon he went to the house of a gentle person. He said to the boy, "I have a little rice. If you want to eat here, I'll give it to you."

The boy said, "Sir, my mother is ill. She has not eaten any food since yesterday. She must be waiting for me. Kindly give me two handfuls of rice so that I may offer to my hungry mother."

That man said, "There is only a little rice. It is not enough even to satisfy your hunger. If you want to eat here, take it, otherwise I'll not give it to you."

The eyes of the boy were filled with tears. He had been hungry for several days. He was reeling because of starvation and was unable to move. He was about to breathe his last. But he was worried about his mother. He said to the gentle person, "When my mother was healthy, she offered food to me and herself remained hungry. Now she is ill. How can I eat this food, when she is hungry?"

Seeing the boy's devotion to his mother, the gentle person was very much pleased with him. So



he went into his house to take rice to give it to the boy, but when he came back out of the house, he saw that the boy had fallen on the ground and had died of starvation. That boy did not accept to eat food without offering it to his mother, though he died of starvation. Such boys, who are devoted to their parents, are blessed indeed!

The Boy, Devoted to His Mother

There was a small boy who always obeyed his mother. He liked to serve his mother and to provide comfort to her. He bore the little pain, which he had to suffer in serving his mother, happily.

Once his mother fell ill. The boy was engaged in serving his mother in every possible way. One night the mother called the boy and said, "Dear son, I am feeling thirsty. Bring me some water."

The boy hurriedly took a glass of water and approached his mother. But the mother had fallen asleep. The boy did not think it proper to disturb her sleep. So he remained standing by her bed with a glass of water. He was waiting for the time, when his mother should wake from sleep. But he remained standing there throughout the night because his mother was sleeping soundly and she did not wake up till next morning.

Next morning when she woke up, she saw that her son was standing silently with a glass of water in his hand, by her bed. The mother's eyes filled with tears of love and she said, "Dear son! Why did you remain standing here throughout the night?"

The son said, "Dear mother! You remained awake for me hundreds of nights. If I remained awake for

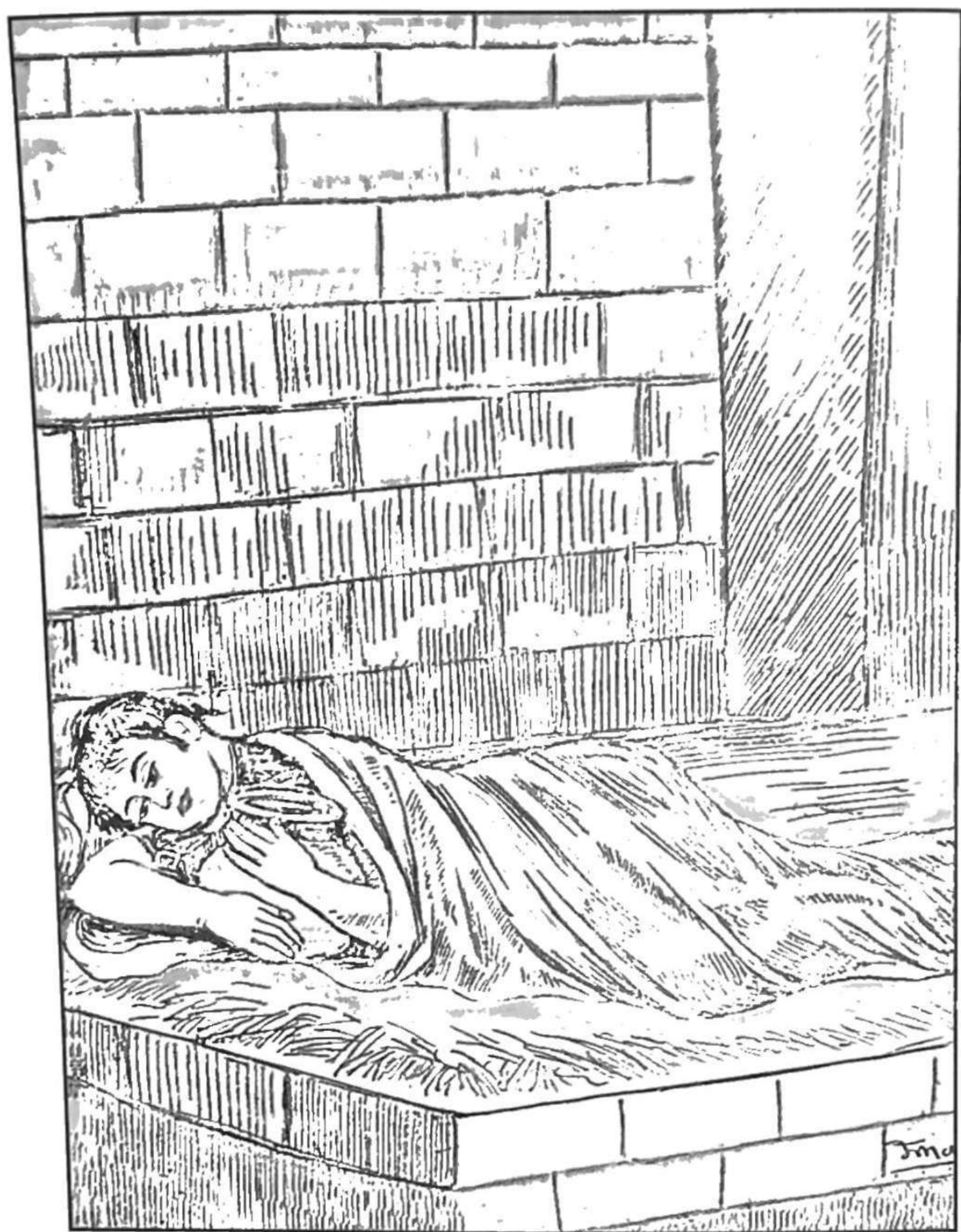


Fazal, Devoted to Father

Hārū Rasīda has been a very famous king. He was the king of Baghdad. Once he was angry with his minister because the latter somehow offended him. So the minister and his son, Fazal were imprisoned.

The minister suffered from such a disease that the cold water was harmful for him. In the morning he needed warm water for washing his hands and face. But in the prison hot water was not available, the prisoners were given cold water. Fazal in the evening filled a jug with water and put it on the lantern. With the heat of the lantern the water became warm and his father washed his hands and face with it.

The jailor of that jail was a very cruel man. When he came to know that Fazal heated up water for his father on the lantern, he got the lantern removed from there. Then Fazal's father had to use cold water which worsened his disease. Phajala could not bear the suffering of his father. He thought of a plan. In the evening he used to fill the pot with water and put it touching his abdomen. Throughout the night with the heat of the body, the water was somewhat warm. His father washed his hands and face with that water. But Fazal could



not sleep soundly because in that case there was fear lest the pot of water should turn over.

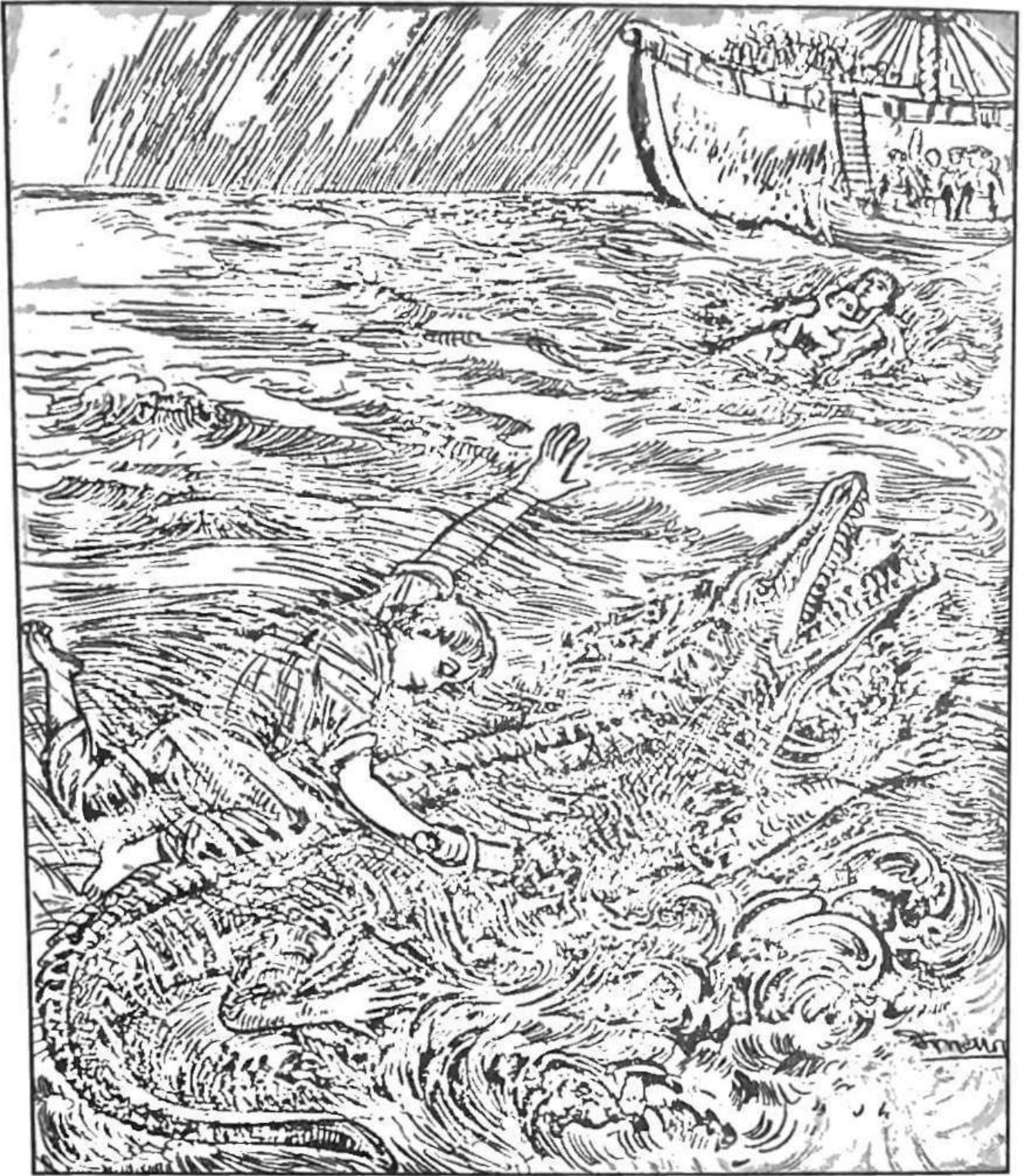
When the jailor came to know Fazal's devotion to his father, his cruel heart melted with pity and he made arrangement to supply hot water to Fazal's father every morning.



A Sailor Son's Devotion to His Father

A sailor's twelve year old son became a sailor. His father had imparted him good training in swimming. One day there was a storm in the sea and the ship lost balance as such a passenger's daughter fell into the sea. Seeing her falling into the sea, the sailor jumped into the sea and holding the girl by her garment began to swim towards the ship. In the meanwhile, a crocodile wanted to catch the sailor. Seeing the crocodile, the sailor trembled with fear. The crew fired shots at the crocodile but all in vain. No one else had the courage to go down into the water to help the sailor.

Having seen the crocodile approaching his father, and his father in the jaws of death, the son, who was devoted to his father, jumped into the sea with a sword and thrust the sword into the belly of the crocodile. The crocodile, being enraged, tried to catch the boy, but the boy, escaping the crocodile's clutches, went on attacking it with his sword.



In the meanwhile, the sailor with that girl, reached near the ship and both of them with the help of the crew were on board. Then the crew and the passengers saw that the fight between the boy and the crocodile was going on. Being wounded with the sword, the crocodile had become feeble and so much blood was flowing out of its

body that the water in its vicinity had become red like blood. The boy was also exhausted and he was undergoing dips in water as if he would be drowned. But the boy mustered courage and with zeal sailed towards the ship and somehow or the other came near the ship. The crew on board threw a rope and the boy caught an end of the rope. Then the crew began to pull the rope but suddenly the crocodile chased the boy and swallowed the boy from his feet to the back.

After that the crocodile jerked so forcefully that the lower part of the boy's body was cut apart and the crocodile, with that part of his body in his mouth, went under the sea. Though the boy had become very feeble, yet he did not loosen hold of the rope. So the crew pulled him on board. Seeing the pitiable condition of his son, his father becoming unconscious fell down with overbearing grief. After sometime, when he regained consciousness, he saw that the boy, lying by him, was looking at him with unblinking eyes. Seeing his father conscious, the boy was very happy and he, putting his head on his father's lap, again gazed at him with unblinking eyes. The sailor's eyes were filled with tears and his heart was beating fast therefore he could not speak.

Seeing his father's condition, the boy, in a hesitating voice but in a happy mood, said to his father, "Daddy, why are you so sad? I am fortunate that I could help you, when your life was in danger. Moreover I have got a very rare opportunity that I am going to die when my head is on your lap and I am looking at your eyes which are full of affection for me. Don't grieve in the least over my death and don't let my merciful mother grieve over my death. Only a fortunate son dies such a happy death. Dear father, my last salutation to you. Kindly pardon me for my offences. Now my tongue and eyes are becoming tense and I find myself unable to speak. Once fondle my head with your affectionate hand."

Having uttered these words, his tongue stopped and his eyes were shut forever. What a fortunate son, devoted to his father, he was!



Ten Year Old Casabianca's Devotion to Father

Napoleon Bonaparte, having become the emperor of France, with thirty thousand expert soldiers, who got victory over Italy, went to Egypt. His plan was that from Egypt, having conquered Syria, Mesopotamia, Iran and Kandhar etc., like Alexander, he should enter India and having driven out the English from there, should establish a great empire governed by France. Being encouraged by his message which he sent from Egypt, Ṭīpū Sultāna (king) waged a war against the English and he was killed. At that time field marshal, Nelson, with the help of the English army, attacked the army of France and defeated it. Thus Napoleon's ambition of establishing a great empire over Asia was ruined. This battle is known as the battle of Nile-River. In this battle the captain of the French ship, Orient, asking his ten year old son to stand on the deck, was engaged in some other war affairs. The English fired cannons on the French ship, it caught fire and hundreds of French warriors and



members of the crew with the captain of the ship were killed. When the French sailors with the help of small life-boats began to save passengers, having left the burning ship, they said to Casabianca "Come with us and save your life in the boat." But that boy said, "My father

has ordered me to stand on deck. So I'll not leave it unless my father orders me to leave it."

The boy cried several times and asked his father, "Father! Where are you? Order me whether I should leave the deck or not." His father had already been shot by the enemy. So who could respond?

The sailors explained to him again and again, "Your father has been killed. Follow our advice. Leave this place and come with us to the small boat." But the boy did not budge an inch. He did not agree to leave the deck. At last the ammunition (explosives) in the ship caught fire and then the ship, with the body of the boy, was burnt to ashes. The English Poetess, Mrs. Hemans while describing this incident has expressed her views about the bravery of the boy that the heart of that boy was the most precious possession of all the valuables that were destroyed in the ship.



Sanātana, A Worthy Son

Sanātana was born in Orissa. There were four members in the family—Sanātana, his loving parents and only one year old brother. Though they did not possess abundant wealth yet they were simple, gentle, kind and loving. The parents, putting their sons on their laps, talked about God and His glories. They were contented and so their life was happy and peaceful and their pious life was proceeding towards the Divinity.

In Orissa once there was a terrible famine continuously for two years. The region, in which Sanātana lived, could not escape that calamity. There was so much scarcity of food, water and grass that men, animals and birds began to die of starvation. There were cases of broad day light robberies.

At that time Sanātana was only eleven years old and his younger brother was four years old. His father went out of the house before the sun rose and gained hardly one or two handfuls of corn by the sun-set. That corn could not at all satisfy their appetite. Having seen the sad and starved appearance of his loving wife and sons, he lost patience and was totally broken. But there was no way out. Their condition became so miserable

that they had nothing to eat. All the household articles had been sold. Sanātana's father had no means of livelihood. He once said to his wife that he wanted to go out somewhere else. She knew that their pitiable condition was forcing him to be detached from the family-ties. She did not agree to his proposal. But one night he silently left home and never returned.

At that time Sanātana was only eleven years old. He had become almost diseased and shattered (broken). Without food, his body was reduced to a skeleton. His mother was confined to bed. The boy was intelligent and devoted to his mother. He went to beg from door to door to save his mother and brother. Having covered a distance of three or four miles daily, he could get some green grass, edible root or a little food. He offered these eatables to his loving mother and younger brother. If anything remained, he ate it, otherwise remained hungry.

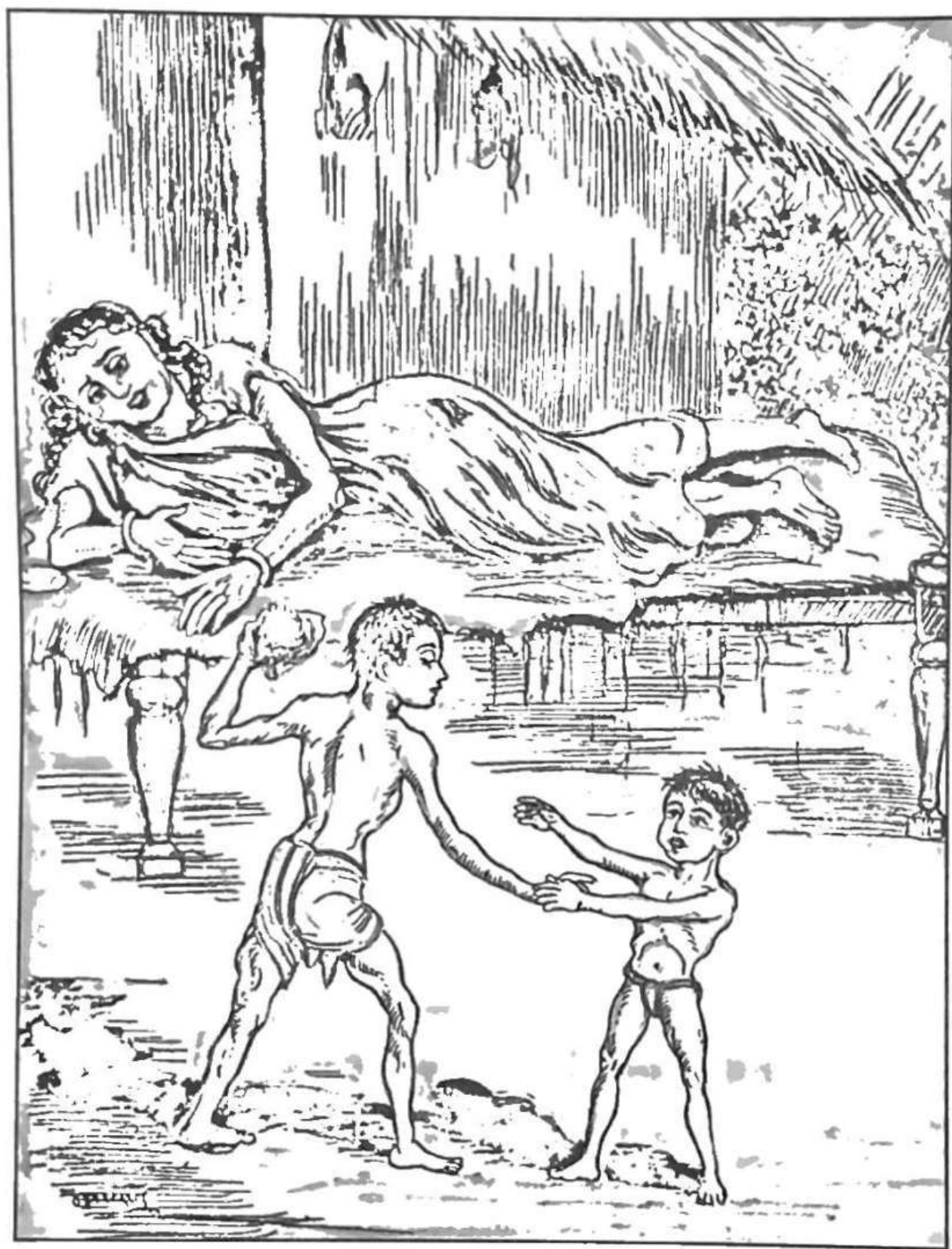
His body became very feeble, he fainted and then again he regained consciousness. He thought of his loving mother and innocent brother. He made efforts to get up and again fell down. He could not afford any food to his mother and brother for three days. He took the walking stick of his father and with the support of the stick he started to beg food. Fainting, stumbling and then again rising up, he moved ahead.

Sanātana, having seen a woman cooking rice, very humbly made an earnest request, "Mother, please a little rice to me also!" The woman looked at the boy. Seeing him pitiable, destitute and poor, she trembled and took pity upon him. She gave him some rice on a leaf. He started with that rice. He fell down and got up several times. But because of his devotion for his mother and love for his brother, with the help of the walking-stick, without caring for his life, he was moving as fast as he could.

It is said that a hungry mother disowns her own son and a hungry female-snake devours its own offspring. Sanātana was also hungry but instead of thinking of his own self, he was running towards his mother and brother, so that he could offer that rice to them.

Having seen Sanātana coming, his younger brother rushed forward to him to get some food. Sanātana gave a little rice to him and it invigorated him a little. He caught Sanātana's hand to get a bit more. But Sanātana went ahead towards his mother. The small brother cried out. The mother heard the cry and while taking a turn she said, "What is the matter?" Sanātana said, "Mother, there is a little rice." He put it before his mother.

She saw the weak and tired body of Sanātana and she also perceived his courage and efforts to protect her life as well as the life of his brother. So



her sunken eyes were moistened. She, hesitatingly, overwhelmed with joyful emotion, said, "May God bless you, dear son! Those parents are fortunate indeed who have such worthy sons as you."



The Girl, Who Sold Her Teeth for Parents

Once in America, there was a terrible famine, in which many people died of starvation. In a family there were three members—an old woman, an old man and their small daughter. That girl earned some money by working as a labourer and they hardly lived from hand to mouth. But by and by that girl became so weak that she could not earn her living by manual labour. So she was very sad that she could not provide food to her old parents who were nearing their end. In the meanwhile, she heard a man saying, that there was an advertisement of a dentist, “A man who wants to sell healthy teeth, will be paid three guineas (gold coins) for each tooth and I’ll extract the teeth myself.”

That girl, who was devoted to her parents, having heard the news, went to the dentist to sell her front tooth. The dentist, having seen the small girl, asked her, “Why are you inviting this trouble for you and going to sustain a loss throughout your life?” She narrated her story to the dentist. Having perceived her profound love for her parents, the dentist’s eyes filled with tears. He immediately offered her ten guineas and asked her to go back home. The girl expressed her thankfulness to the dentist, she got very much pleased and began to



serve her parents with great enthusiasm.



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